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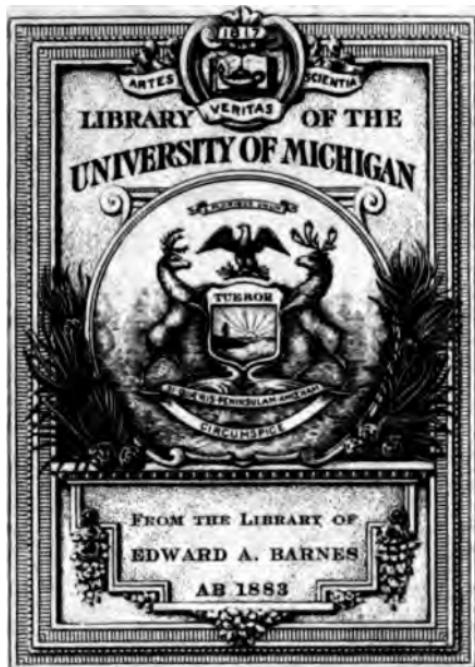
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THE HISTORY
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ALAIN RENÉ LE SAGE

THE HISTORY

OF

VANILLO GONZALES

SURNAMED

THE MERRY BACHELOR

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF ALAIN RENÉ LE SAGE

"Mores hominum multorum videt et urbes"

"He many men and many manners saw"

With Four Original Etchings by R. de Los Rios

LONDON

J. C. NIMMO AND BAIN

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THE HISTORY
OF
VANILLO GONZALES;
OR,
THE MERRY BACHELOR.



CHAPTER I.

*THE BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF VANILLO; AND THE KIND
OF EDUCATION HE RECEIVED.*

STATIUS opens his Thebaid with the rape of Europa, as the first cause of the foundation of Thebes. But do not be alarmed, my kind reader; I will not be induced, by his example, to commence the story of my life by informing you who were my ancestors in the reign of Pelagus. It is dangerous to dive too deeply into the history of one's relations; and I must acknowledge that I should feel greatly embarrassed if I were obliged to speak even of my grandfathers, of whom I never received any very clear or satisfactory information. With the characters of my father and mother, however, I am well acquainted. They were engaged in professions of very opposite kinds; for while my mother was employed in bringing people into the world, my father was equally industrious in

putting them out of it. In short, my father, Mr. Stephen Gonzales, was a venerable doctor of physic; and my mother, like the mother of Socrates, was a midwife.

My father having taken his degrees in the university of Alcala, chose the city of Murcia for the place of his residence and the scene of his medical enterprises; and he was so fortunate as to become, in a short time, the most fashionable physician of the country, though there was nothing new in his modes of practice, for he followed implicitly the prescriptions of the ancients, and therefore whenever a patient fell a victim to his advice, an event which recurred but too frequently, he used to say that it certainly was not his fault.

Being one day called in to attend a difficult parturition, in which my mother, then unmarried, assisted, he was so charmed with her youth, her beauty, and the dexterous manner in which, under his inspection, she exercised her obstetric talents, that he soon afterwards married her, and I was the first fruit of this union. My mother, in about three years afterwards, was delivered of a daughter, who was borne to the baptismal font by a neighbouring gentleman and his female friend, and christened Inesilla; a name since rendered extremely celebrated, as the reader will perceive by the sequel of this history.

As the wives of physicians generally die before their husbands, my father lost his professional associate before I had attained the ninth year of my age. Being placed as a boarder at one of the first schools in the city, where I was instructed in the rudiments of the Latin tongue, my progress in learning was so rapid that I was, in a short time, qualified to enter

into the third class at the university of Salamanca, where it was intended I should be sent, to complete my studies. But at this important period of my life my father was seized with a violent disorder ; and, treating his complaint according to the prescriptions of Hippocrates, soon left my sister and myself orphans to bewail his loss.

Damien Carnicero, my mother's brother, the most celebrated surgeon in Murcia, and my godfather, took us under his care. Conceiving that I was more likely to succeed in his profession than in that of my father, who, accredited as he was for medical skill, had not died rich, he took me immediately from school, and bound me apprentice to himself. Like other apprentices, I was at first obliged to sweep the shop, to draw water from the well, to wash the shaving-cloths, and to heat the curling-irons. I had at this time just entered into the fourteenth year of my age, and being a thoughtless, giddy, gay, lively lad, I acquired the nickname of *Merry Pin*. At the expiration of two months, I was permitted to handle and instructed how to use the razor. A poor beggar, who came to ask a charitable shaving at the shop, was the first subject on which I tried my skill in surgery : for as my uncle and his assistant were both abroad, the operation of course devolved upon me. Desiring the poor mendicant to seat himself on a bench which was appropriated to these kind of customers, I placed a dirty shop-cloth beneath his chin, and lathered him so spiritedly about the nose, mouth, and eyes, that he grinned like an old monkey tormented by its keeper. But things took a very different turn when I began to use the razor : for the instrument, unfortunately for my patient, was so perverse, that at every stroke it

might be said rather to carry away the flesh than to shave off the beard.

"My little friend," exclaimed the beggar, not being able any longer to endure the pain he felt, "pray tell me whether you are shaving my beard or stripping my skin?"

"Both," replied I; "for your beard, my honest fellow, is so thick and stubborn, that it is impossible to take off the one without injuring the other."

My uncle, who entered the shop just as I had finished my operation, could scarcely refrain from laughing at the ludicrous figure which the mangled face of the poor devil presented to his view; but, assuming a solemn countenance, he presented the sufferer with a few pieces of money, in order to alleviate the misfortune of having fallen under my hands.

This poor fellow most probably took great care to circulate intelligence of the extent of my skill in shaving to all his brethren; for from that hour no beggar has ever ventured to ask charity at the shop.

My uncle severely reprobated my conduct; and, to punish me for having acquitted myself so badly, interdicted me from using the razor until farther orders. The scissors, however, I was still permitted to wield. One morning, a young student of the university came to the shop for the purpose of having his hair dressed. The task was assigned to me. This young gentleman was the son of an eminent woollen-draper; and my uncle, to have a watchful eye upon my proceedings, chose to be present during this operation, that I might be the more attentive to my duty. I succeeded tolerably well for some time, and cut his hair according to the fundamental rules of the art. In short, everything went on in the happiest way ima-

ginable, until the moment I was about to make a finishing-stroke, when unfortunately forgetting that he had ears under his hair, I carried away at least half of one of them by a single clip of the scissors. The student uttered a dreadful scream ; and my kind protector was no sooner informed of the catastrophe than he bestowed upon me an equal and alternate quantity of maledictions and blows. Having applied these little correctives, which I well deserved, he dressed the wounds I had made, and accompanied the sufferer to his father's house, to whom he represented the injury as the accident of an awkward blockhead, whom he had left, by the severe punishment he had inflicted, half dead in the shop. The draper, sensible that no other compensation could be procured for this irreparable injury, was at length appeased by the story my uncle told him, and granted me his pardon.

The maledictions and blows, however, which my uncle had given me, were not the only punishments I received for this offence. I was now interdicted not only from shaving, but from cutting of hair, and every other surgical operation whatever, under pain of being strapped ; so that I was reduced exclusively to the exercise of my initiatory functions.

But my inevitable destiny counteracted the effect of these necessary restraints. One afternoon, while only my uncle and myself were at home, a man betwixt six and seven feet high, with a tremendous sword by his side, and of no very conciliating aspect, entered the shop. He had all the appearance of a *Valiente*; his hair was twisted, his hat fiercely cocked, with a large feather sprouting from one side of it, and his whiskers extended from the corners of his mouth

the door, and I was about to go to bed, when I heard a noise in the kitchen. I ran to the door to see who it was, and discovered a great number of persons gathered around one of his most particular customers, who was preparing to sleep. As I entered the shop, the people rushed instinctively with their slaves or their friends, leaving his customer condition. I have never seen such a scene turned up before; the hanging straight down. They all said, "Sir, you see, that the gentleman's patience will not last long, and, turning himself toward me, he said, "Friend," said the man, "are not you able to speak at your master in the room?"

The question touched my pride; and, feeling that I could not, without discrediting myself, answer it in negative, I boldly replied, "Yes, sir."

To afford him, therefore, unquestionable testimony, I took the tongs of finishing a whisker from my pocket, took the irons red-hot from the fire, and passing them too closely under his nose, until they singed his upper lip, and quite burned away the end which had so rashly undertaken to decide the question; and, rising in alarm, and a sense of danger, from his chair, "A you son of a the usual batches," exclaimed he, "do you take me for St. Laurence?"



R. de Los Rios





At the same time he drew his sword to run me through the body; but, before he could accomplish his design, I reached the door of the shop, and decamped with such rapidity, that in less than a minute I found myself at the extremity of the city; so true is it that flying and running are essentially different.

I sought refuge in the house of a mercer who lived in the suburbs, and who was distantly related to the family by my mother's side, where, conceiving myself free from all danger, "Now," exclaimed I, "let fate do its worst in this affair."

The mercer, on my representing to him the disaster which had happened, burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; and laying hold of the curling irons, which I still held fast in my hand, observed a large lock of hair with an incipient curl at the end of it, so long and bristly that it would have made an excellent bottle-brush.

I continued in my asylum, where my uncle, who immediately conjectured the place of my retreat, found me the ensuing day. He told us that the enraged gentleman, having exhausted his anger in a thousand horrid imprecations against me, was at length appeased by the apologies he made, and went away.

My uncle carried me home to his shop, severely lectured my misconduct, and seemed to despair of my attaining any great proficiency in the arts of surgery. The shame of ignorance, however, urged me to industry, and in a short time I acquired so complete a knowledge of the use of the razor and the scissors, that I could shave without flaying the skin and dress without amputating the ears of his patients.

I even attained some knowledge of the use of the lancet, although I must candidly confess, that in the first operation which I performed with this instrument I disabled the sword-arm of a young soldier, whom I was entrusted to bleed; for, having heard that Hippocrates, in his Treatise on Phlebotomy, recommends a large orifice, I made one which appeared rather like the wound of a lance than the incision of a lancet; and my patient, perhaps, was extremely fortunate that he escaped with only losing the use of his arm.

Indeed, I could not be anywhere so well situated to learn the art of butchery, rather than that of adroit surgery, as with my protector Damien Carnicer; and I was perfectly astonished that any person should be so foolish as to place himself under his hands; for he was bigoted to the practice of the ancients, and followed their precepts with scrupulous precision and severity.

A few instances of his mode of practice, in particular cases, will completely exhibit his professional character. In venæsection, he made the incision transversely; and to close the orifice either choked the vein with a silk cord, or cauterised the wound with a red-hot iron. To relieve a patient from the pangs of the gout, he made punctures on the afflicted part with needles put together in the form of a brush, and dissipated all scrofulous swellings by pricking the parts with the sharp points that grow on a thorn-back's tail. A nasal hæmorrhage he stopped by making a transverse incision from one part of the forehead to the other, or rather two incisions, in the shape of St. Andrew's Cross, all round the hairy part of the head. The most powerful caustics were con-

stantly applied to the hip, loins, and thighs, to remove sciaticas ; and he extracted the headache by placing red-hot irons on each side of the nostrils, temples, cheeks, and under the chin. The element of fire, in short, was his grand specific for the cure of every disorder ; and the belly, legs, and thighs of dropsical persons were fried or broiled without mercy. But, as it sometimes happened, whenever a refractory patient obstinately refused to try the effect of these salutary ordeals, he humanely accommodated his practice to the weakness of the patient; and, under pretence of employing a more anodyne remedy than fire, he scalded the flesh with hot water or boiling oil, unless they preferred being singed with ignified sulphur, spirits of wine, gunpowder, melted lead, or liquified glass.

This able professor, anxious to instruct me in all the mysteries of the healing art, frequently carried me with him when he had any grand operation to perform ; but, instead of affording information to my mind, he tortured every feeling of my heart. I am sure that I should have endured, without complaining, all the pains that can afflict mankind, rather than have undergone the mildest of his remedies. He was, however, principal surgeon to the hospital of Murcia, where I constantly attended him, to learn this art of broiling people into health.

Leaving me one morning by the bedside of a man who had been broiled in various ways for the dropsy, the unhappy sufferer entreated me with doleful cries to afford him one drop of water, to assuage the raging thirst by which he was devoured. The heart of a surgeon should be inexorable to the cries of his patient, but, unable to resist the affecting entreaty

which was made to me upon this occasion, I presented to his lips a large jug half full of water, which he seized with avidity between his hands, and emptied in a moment. No sooner, however, had I afforded him this comfort than he fainted away, and experienced, by an almost instantaneous death, a perfect relief from all his complaints.

Great as my regret was at having thus rashly listened to the voice of pity, it did not prevent me from profiting by the fatal event my kindness had occasioned: for, perceiving the strings of a purse just peeping from the fob of his breeches, which lay under the pillow on which his head reclined, I felt a strong inclination to take it away, and my virtue was too weak to resist so powerful a temptation. I accordingly drew away the purse, which was not an empty one, from the pocket, and, hastily concealing it, marched out of the hospital, leaving the deceased, whose heir I had thus become, without having given him the trouble to make a will in my favour.

CHAPTER II.

VANILLO RESOLVES TO QUIT THE PROFESSION OF SURGERY, AND PROCEEDS TO SALAMANCA TO COMPLETE HIS STUDIES.

THE impatience I felt to discover the value of the property which had so unexpectedly devolved upon me, would not permit me to go far without satisfying my curiosity. Stopping, therefore, at the first convenient place for the purpose, I untied the strings of the purse, and discovered that it contained five-and-thirty beautiful doubloons, as new and shining as if they had been just coined, together with a small packet containing a ring set with brilliants, which, though ignorant of the quality of precious stones, I concluded to be of great value. What a treasure to a poor lad, who, until this moment, had never touched a piece of gold! I thought my fortune was made.

"Possessed of such riches," said I to myself, "I cannot do better than to proceed to Salamanca, and finish my studies by attending a course of philosophy. I shall make a princely figure at the university. It is certainly more congenial to my disposition to adopt the pursuits of literature, than to continue the vile profession in which I am at present engaged. Adieu, then, to surgery, both ancient and modern! I will quit the city of Murcia immediately." In short, without even an inclination to say farewell to my uncle, who, without doubt, would have opposed my design, I instantly set off on the road to Salamanca.

Walking closely along the banks of the Segura, I

arrived at the village of Molina, where, finding myself fatigued, I determined to pass the night, having already travelled twelve miles, which I thought a tolerable distance for the first day's journey. The master of the inn, in which I intended to lodge, perceiving a foot traveller without whiskers, no sword by his side, and but rather meanly habited, concluded from these appearances that I did not abound in money; addressing me in consequence with great familiarity, "Young gentleman," said he, "if I may judge by your appearance, you are not overloaded with silver, and will therefore, perhaps, have no objection to regale yourself with a nice bit of bread and a moderate quantity of cheese for your supper to-night."

Greatly mortified by this scornful and insulting address, "Sir," replied I, with asperity, "take notice, that although I may not be overburdened with silver, I have plenty of gold;" and immediately drawing the purse from my pocket, I exhibited to him a handful of the doubloons.

Surprise and astonishment seized the countenance of the host at this sight; and taking one of them in his hand to examine if it was real, "Ah! you young rogue," said he, putting his finger to the side of his nose, "you have been robbing a tender-hearted father. You have an inclination to travel, and in order to insure yourself a kind reception on the road, have laid violent hands on the good man's treasures."

"You are deceived," returned I; "your conjecture is without foundation, for I have neither father nor mother alive. These double pistoles were given to me by uncles and aunts, who raised a contribution

among themselves to enable me to proceed to Salamanca, to finish the studies I commenced at Murcia, the place of my nativity."

"Your friends, then," replied the host, "are very imprudent to send you alone with so much gold about you, upon the mules of St. Francis, to the distance of seventy-two miles from your own province. If you will follow my advice," added he, "you will continue your route to-morrow morning along the banks of the river until you arrive at Cruz de Caravaca, where you may bargain with a muleteer to conduct you to Cividad-Real, from whence you may reach Salamanca by the same kind of conveyance in five or six days."

I thanked my host for the friendly information he had afforded me; and, promising to follow his advice, asked what he could let me have for supper.

"I have really nothing in the house," replied he, "but bread and cheese; there is, however, a rich farmer in the neighbourhood who breeds poultry for the purpose of supplying the markets at Carthagena; I will send to him and purchase a couple of chickens, with which I can make you a delicious fricassee; and I promise you not only excellent bread, but some of the finest wine in all Spain."

"You promise well," answered I.

"And I will keep my word," said he. "I talk, I know, like most of my fraternity, but I am determined to make you confess that there is at least one host in Spain who treats his customers with civility and good cheer."

And I acknowledge that I had no reason to be discontented either with his fare or his conversa-

tion. He possessed a lively fancy, and, contrary to the generality of Spanish innkeepers, was a very honest man ; at least he gave me great reason to think so, from the conversation I had with him during supper ; for, placing himself at the table to assist me in eating the fricassed chickens, he represented to me, with great gaiety and good-humour, the dangers to which I should be exposed at Salamanca, and without assuming the austerity of a moral preceptor, exhorted me carefully to avoid them.

The ensuing morning, when I took my leave of him, he wished me every possible prosperity ; and addressing me with great gravity, "Young gentleman," said he, "I am inclined, in order to enable you to guard against the dangers to which your youth is likely to expose you, to make you a present ;" and he immediately presented me with a little box, containing a thread-paper and needles.

Surprised at so whimsical a gift, I asked him his reasons for making me such a present.

"I present them to you," replied he, "because there are three occasions upon which you may find a needle and thread particularly serviceable.

"First, Sew up your mouth whenever you may be tempted to speak *mal-a-propos*. Secondly, Sew up your purse whenever your generous feelings are likely to lead you into an idle expense. And as for the third sewing," added he, "I shall leave that to your own reflection, upon experience, to find out."

Bursting into a violent fit of laughter at this ludicrous conceit, I complied with his request, and accepting the box, promised to preserve it during

my life as a sacred testimony of his friendship and judicious counsel.

I then continued my journey, keeping the banks of the river until the close of the day, when I arrived at Cruz de Caravaca, where I found a muleteer, who, for a certain sum, agreed to carry me not only to Cividad-Real, but even to the city of Salamanca.

CHAPTER III.

VANILLO, HAVING REACHED SALAMANCA, PLACES HIMSELF IN A BOARDING-HOUSE, THE MASTER OF WHICH INTRODUCES HIM INTO THE THIRD CLASS AT THE UNIVERSITY.

ON my arrival at Salamanca, a place I had frequently wished with much ardour to see, I went into the vicinity of the university, and addressing myself to an old half-blind librarian, who was squinting for customers at the door of his shop, I requested him to direct me to a good tutor.

"If you wish," said he, "for a tutor who is not only learned, but who also keeps an excellent table, I recommend you to Doctor Canizares; a man you will be pleased with. He lives there," pointing with his finger to a house at a short distance: "you will hereafter thank me for directing you to a man who lives so hospitably, that his worst dinners are better even than the feasts of other tutors."

Relying implicitly upon the recommendation of the old librarian, I went accordingly to the doctor's house, who, conceiving that I intended to increase the number of his inmates, received me with every demonstration of civility and respect.

The person of the doctor was extremely thin and tall, his skin dry and withered, his beard black, his eyes sunk into their sockets, and his cheeks hollow. It is strange, thought I, that a man the hospitality of whose board is so celebrated, should appear so lank and meagre; but perhaps it may

be constitutional, for I remembered to have heard my uncle say, that bodies, though composed entirely of skin and bone, have sometimes such keen appetites, that if the devil should appear to them in the shape of victuals, they would swallow him horns and all.

Doctor Canizares inquired my name, the situation of my family, the place from whence I came, and my views in visiting Salamanca. I answered his questions in the way that seemed most advantageous to my interests; and, after further conversation, in which he assured me that I should not repent of having selected his house for my residence, he conducted me to a small apartment in the attic story, containing no other furniture than a chest of drawers, two chairs, a table, and a truckle-bed. "This, young gentleman," said he, "is your apartment, where you may deposit your clothes whenever you please."

"I have no clothes," replied I; "but, thank God, I have that which will purchase whatever I may want; and, to make your mind perfectly easy on my account, I am willing to pay you the first quarter in advance."

The doctor caught with eagerness at this proposal; and, on his telling me that his terms were forty pistoles a year, I took twenty doubloons from my purse, which I exhibited so as to attract his notice, and gave him five of them for my first quarter's board and lodging. After having carefully examined each of them one by one, he assured me that no pains on his part should be spared to render me the most learned member of the University; inquired, with seeming anxiety, what progress

I had made in my studies ; and, interrogating me upon subjects of moral philosophy and the sciences, declared that I was well qualified to enter into the third class. This flattering appreciation of my abilities was followed by a promise, that he would undertake to procure my reception into the college without any examination, as the regent of that form was his intimate friend ; but while he was proceeding to recommend the study of the belles lettres, the bell summoned us to supper. We accordingly descended into a parlour, where, in a kind of refectory, stood a long and narrow table, at which were placed ten or twelve students, all of whom were about my own age, except two, who might, perhaps, have reached their twentieth year.

Having saluted the company on entering the room, and taken my seat at the table, my attention was attracted by the similarity of the messes which covered it. Before each student were placed morsels of bread about three ounces in weight, and two plates, in one of which were two onions, roasted on the cinders, and in the other a handful of nuts. The apparent frugality of the repast, which did not in any degree correspond with the praises the librarian had bestowed on the liberality of the doctor, mortified me. Conjecturing, however, that it might be the evening of a fast, I consoled myself with the hope of better fare on the succeeding days. The same quantity of bread, onions, nuts, and a pint mug of wine, so abundantly diluted that I should have preferred the pure water to such a tasteless mixture, were also placed before me. But a keen stomach reconciles every species of food. I devoured my bread and onions, cracked my nuts, and drank my mixture

with an avidity which, if the doctor observed me, must have convinced him that I was not a young man of a very squeamish appetite. My companions did equal honour to their respective portions; and everything on the table was so entirely eaten, cracked, and made an end of, that even a famished sparrow could not have picked up a single crumb.

The repast being finished, we rose from table to enjoy, in an open court adjoining to the room, the fineness of the evening. I soon made myself acquainted with my fellow-students, particularly with the eldest of them, who, after some conversation, drew me aside and asked me who it was that had been so much my enemy as to advise me to board and lodge with Doctor Canizares. I told him it was an old blear-eyed librarian who lived in the neighbourhood.

"Oh, the malicious wretch!" exclaimed he, bursting into a fit of laughter; "the old fellow was only joking with you; for he, as well as the whole neighbourhood, well knows we are so scantily fed, that our temperance and frugality are the common subject of laughter."

"Why," replied I, "our supper convinced me that I was not in a very hospitable house; and I assure you, I would change my situation to-morrow, if I had not foolishly paid the old rogue a quarter in advance."

"I should have left the house long before now," replied the student, "if the reason I have for staying was not much stronger than my inclination to depart."

"Why, what motive can you possibly have," said I, "stronger than hunger?"

"I will inform you," replied the student. "The learning of Doctor Canizares is much greater than even his avarice. He possesses a complete knowledge of the Greek and Roman authors; and I assure you, that, although he feeds the body upon slender diet, he is capable of furnishing the mind with a rich variety of curious and useful information; and therefore it is that I content myself with his nuts and his onions."

"You afford me infinite consolation," exclaimed I. "I am, like you, disposed to endure the pangs of an empty stomach for the sake of possessing a well-stored mind."

While I was engaged in this kind of conversation with my fellow-student, whose name was Don Ramirez de Prado, the bell summoned us to bed; and we soon afterwards parted, with reciprocal assurances of friendship and esteem.

On entering my chamber, I threw myself upon a bed harder than marble, the sheets of which were made of small rough towels, so coarsely sewed together that the seams were more annoying than the texture of the cloth. In defiance, however, of these inconveniences, I slept like a dormouse until nine o'clock the next morning.

While I was dressing, the Doctor entered the room, followed by a person whom he introduced to me as the family tailor usually employed by the young gentlemen in his house: "He waits on you," continued he, "with an offer of his services; he is a skilful workman, and so conscientious in the way of business, that he never takes an inch of cloth too much."

Not being very well equipped, I bargained with him for some clothes; and, on my paying him six

double pistoles, he agreed to furnish me with a complete suit in two days.

The tailor had scarcely left me before the bell announced that the hour of dinner approached; and I descended soon afterwards into the apartment where we had supped the preceding evening. My fellow-students also assembled, and we took our respective seats at the table. Although I had prepared my mind to expect a very frugal repast, the dinner now served up far surpassed my expectation. The first course regaled us with soup like that which they usually give to hounds for the purpose of preserving their scent; crusts of mouldy bread floated on its surface, but real *bouillée* was difficult to be seen. Before every student stood a porringer, from which he crammed the stomach with a degree of appetite that excited my admiration; and, although I had not hitherto tasted much adversity, I tasted and supped my soup until I had emptied the porringer.

My stomach was so satisfied by this curious mess of *soup saincè*, that I could not swallow a morsel of our second course; which consisted of a small dish of fricasseed goats' trotters, in which, I fancy, the cook had not forgot the horns, so much did it seem to grate between the teeth. The other students, however, whose appetites were whetted by a constant famine, fell upon the fricassee with so much eagerness, that it vanished in the twinkling of an eye.

This repast, which, without danger of contradiction, I may say was not the worst I saw at Doctor Canizare's, being finished, I went into the city to purchase such linen, books, and other necessaries, as were suitable to a student of the third class; and when all my purchases were made, alas! no more

than twenty doubloons in my pocket. "Courage, Vanillo," said I aloud to myself, "your affairs, young man, seem still in a good condition. Twenty double pistoles is a little fortune; and when they are exhausted, I have a further resource in a diamond ring; for a resource it certainly is: but, stop, my friend! Have you any knowledge of the value of precious stones? You know very well that you have not. Confess, then, what a fool you would find yourself if this diamond, upon which you rely so much, should prove a counterfeit."

The torment which this last reflection occasioned was intolerable, and going immediately into the great square, where the most opulent merchants reside, I entered the shop of a jeweller, and producing the ring, requested he would conscientiously inform me what it was worth. The jeweller, after a very attentive examination, valued it at a hundred pistoles, and asked me if I was inclined to dispose of it. I told him that I had no such intention at present, but that in all probability it would soon find its way to market.

"Well," said he, "whenever you choose to part with it, bring it me, and I will give you its full value."

Considering myself another Crœsus, I left the shop, and reached home with a mind occupied by the most agreeable reflections.

"Signor Gonzales," said the Doctor to me as I entered the room, "I have spoken to the Professor; and, upon certain proofs which I have given him of your capacity, he will receive you into the third class without the usual examination. You may take your seat in the college whenever you please."

This I determined to do as soon as I received my new clothes; and accordingly, a few days afterwards,

Doctor Canizares, taking me in his hand to the University, conducted me to the apartment of the licentiate Gutierrez Hostigador, the regent of the third class, who received us with great pomp and gravity.

I never saw the countenance of a pedant in which presumption was more strongly marked than in that of this licentiate.

"I beg leave," said the Doctor, "to introduce to you a young gentleman who wishes to augment the number of your scholars."

The licentiate, placing his hand upon my head, said, "Sir, I have only a few words to address to you. If you possess talents, and are fond of study, we shall be contented with each other; but if you are indolent or licentious, you will not find favour in my sight."

I assured the regent that I would do everything in my power to afford him satisfaction.

"Then," said he, "you may take your seat on the form this morning. But let me recommend you not to suffer a syllable of what I shall say to be lost; for you will hear nothing from me but what is worthy of your attention."

We took our leave of the licentiate; Doctor Canizares retiring to his own home, and I among the scholars, who were walking in the area of the college which is appropriated to the third class. Being soon afterwards summoned to the hall, I seated myself, as a new-comer, on the lowest form; and the better to ingratiate myself with the regent, prepared to listen to him with the attention he had recommended. A profound silence prevailed throughout the room the moment he appeared; and I shall never forget the arrogance with which he seated himself in the professor's chair.

The Great Mogul, when seated on his throne, has less ostentation than was exhibited on this occasion by this pedagogue, on whom I kept my eyes invariably fixed. The countenance of every scholar discovered the fearful reverence in which he was held; but from the members of the third class he seemed to expect the humblest attention.

When any of his disciples passed him in the purlieus of the college, and inadvertently, or otherwise, neglected the common salutation, he vociferated, in the most imperious tone, "Hey, sir! where is your hat?" And if the offender did not immediately answer so as to satisfy his vanity, he was ordered into the custody of the lictors, that is to say, the ushers, by whom he was constantly followed, who were ordered to seize the contumacious scholar, and drag him to the rostrum, where he was soon convinced that his breeches had but one button.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROGRESS VANILLO MADE IN THE STUDY OF THE BELLES LETTRES; THE CAUSE WHICH ABATED HIS FONDNESS FOR STUDY; AND THE COURSE HE TOOK UPON LEAVING THE UNIVERSITY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the severity of the Professor, I studied under his instructions for six months, and became the most celebrated of his pupils. My application, indeed, during this period was so intense, that I could not fail of acquiring considerable knowledge. The regular performance of college exercises was not sufficient to satisfy my assiduity, but I studied, at my leisure hours, those excellent authors which Doctor Canizares recommended to my attention, and which his learned and critical commentaries on their texts enabled me the better to understand; and by these means profited at least as much by the instructions I received at home, as by those I received at college.

The pursuits of learning, however, did not prevent me from sometimes strolling along the banks of the Tormes, which, by its agreeable and romantic windings, contributes to increase the beauty of the rural scenery which surrounds Salamanca. Don Ramirez de Prado, the eldest student of our house, was generally my companion in these excursions. He had, indeed, a powerful reason for preferring my company to that of other students; for, knowing that I had money, he did me the favour to become the borrower, and to continue my debtor to this day; the refresh-

ments also of these walks were always enjoyed at my expense.

Don Ramirez de Prado, although a young collegian, had acquired some knowledge of the world; and generally passed his vacations, and sometimes his class days, at certain houses in the city, where, in the company of fashionable females, he relaxed the severities of study. Among other females, he had formed an acquaintance with a Signora Dalfa, the widow of a doctor of laws, about thirty-five years of age, of an agreeable person, and very lively disposition; who, to her own charms, which were quite sufficient to attract a number of admirers, added those of a niece of her husband's, named Bernardina, a young female whom no eye could behold without endangering the safety of the heart.

This experienced student offered one afternoon to introduce me to his female friends, assuring me that nothing so much contributed to polish the manners of a young man, as the company of rational and elegant women. I was easily persuaded by a companion with whom I lived in the closest friendship, and we accordingly went together to the house of Signora Dalfa. The reception we met with convinced me that my conductor was upon very close and intimate terms with the family. The ladies almost overwhelmed me with civilities, because I was his friend, or rather, because it had been previously settled amongst themselves, that this was the most likely means to seduce me. An agreeable conversation of three hours, in which the wit and spirit of the widow shone with great brilliancy, in a thousand lively and diverting sallies, formed the entertainment of the evening; but, although the niece spoke very

seldom, she occasionally glanced at me a pair of fine bright eyes, which inspired me with more delight than all the brilliant sallies of her aunt. Bernardino, who was exactly my own age, and, without exaggeration, a beautiful girl, created the warmest emotions in my breast; in short, without thinking of love, I became deeply enamoured with her charms.

It was not difficult for Don Ramirez, on our return, to conjecture the sentiments which occupied my mind. "Signor Gonzales," said he, as we were walking home, "what think you of my fair friends? Which are you for, the widow or the niece?"

"For the niece," replied I, "although I admit that her aunt is extremely amiable."

"Your candour upon this occasion," answered Don Ramirez, "calls for an open avowal on my part. Know, then, that I adore Signora Dalsa; and as we are not rivals, both of us may, without restraint, pursue our respective inclinations."

Study, perhaps, would in a short time have obliterated all recollection of Bernardino; but four days had scarcely elapsed before Don Ramirez thus addressed me: "Signor Gonzales, I have great news to communicate to you. You have charmed the lovely Bernardino. She has disclosed the secret of her affection to her aunt, who has confidentially imparted it to me; and the extraordinary friendship I feel for you induces me to announce it to you, to enable you to profit by the discovery I have made. If you are happy enough, as I have no doubt you will be, to fix her affection so firmly as to induce her to marry you, you may live at your ease the remainder of your days; for she will be the sole heiress of a maternal uncle, whose fortune is immense, and who

has only two children extremely sickly and infirm. Pay your addresses to her, therefore, with the warmest assiduity. To-morrow I will again introduce you into her company. All I regret," added he, "is, that I have not a penny in my pocket; for, if I had money, I would prepare upon this occasion a little elegant collation for them; women are extremely fond of those who pay them the tribute of expense, and there are some lovers so sensible of it, that they frequently, by such means only, ensure their success."

Hastily interrupting my companion, "Well, my friend," exclaimed I, "the money that may be necessary is ready. I have yet some double pistoles remaining, which do not belong to any man alive;" and true it was that their real owner was dead. I accordingly drew from my purse two doubloons, which I presented to Don Ramirez, asking him if that sum would be sufficient. "Without doubt," replied he, "we must proceed economically. I perceive, my young friend, that you are lavish of your money. I must check this generous disposition. Leave the management of these matters to me. I will undertake to provide a handsome collation which shall cost you very little money, and still do you great honour."

I ought upon this occasion to have availed myself of the needle and thread with which my friendly host at Molina had presented me; but so far was I from conceiving that I was employing my doubloons improvidently, that I felt myself much obliged to my companion for having suggested this pleasurable party.

The ensuing day, I accompanied Don Ramirez

a second time to the mansion of Signora Dalsa, who received us with accumulated tokens of politeness. When the refreshments which Don Ramirez had prepared, consisting of a few baskets of fruit, and a variety of liquors, some iced, and others in their common state, were produced, the ladies affected great surprise.

"Young gentleman," said Signora Dalsa, with seeming uneasiness, "you will oblige me to find fault with you for putting yourself to this expense; you are young, and cannot possess more money than your necessary disbursements require; you should therefore manage it prudently."

"Madam," replied my friend, "it is not I who entertain you; it is Signor Gonzales, who, thank Heaven, is sufficiently rich to afford a collation of this kind every day, without injuring his circumstances. He has neither father nor mother living, is complete master of his actions, in possession of a good fortune, and enjoys that situation in which every young man of family and spirit would wish to live."

On my part, I assured the ladies, that the refreshments produced were of such trifling value as to be scarcely worthy of their attention. Upon this observation, Don Ramirez took occasion to pass encomiums upon my generosity, in terms so extravagant, that if I had not been, as I certainly was, totally devoid of experience, I must have perceived that my friend was privately leagued with these female Circes, and that their only design was to ruin me,—an event which happened very soon afterwards; for, becoming every day more and more in love with Bernardina, I made her so many presents, and gave her aunt so many

collations, that my doubloons disappeared, and my diamond ring found its way to the show-glass of the jeweller.

I had very little money remaining, when the irregularity of my conduct attracted the notice of Doctor Canizares, who, fearful that I might disable myself from paying him at the expiration of the current quarter, insisted on having his money immediately, although it wanted several days of being due. My pride being piqued by his suspicions of my misconduct, although they were extremely just, I instantly paid him, and, without waiting until my time expired, immediately quitted his house to take my abode elsewhere.

I retired to a furnished lodging, which I hired in the city, at a considerable distance from the University; and, perceiving that I had now only four pistoles remaining, out of all the wealth I once possessed, resolutely determined to abandon those studies and gallantries which I had no longer the ability to continue.

Poverty soon healed the wounds of love, which had so injuriously interrupted the progress of my studies; and I resolved never more to behold the treacherous Ramirez, or the female adventurers, who had conspired with him to purloin my property. In this renunciation I felt a sort of consolation for the loss of my money, as if in not having them as witnesses of my misery, I was in any degree less miserable.

One morning, as I was coming out of the church of St. Stephen, my tutelary saint, a servant in a very splendid livery saluted me. Upon an attentive perusal of his face, I recollect him as a class-

fellow at college. "How, Mansano!" exclaimed I, "have you also played truant from the University? You have had, perhaps, some unlucky disagreement with the licentiate Hostigador?"

"Even so," replied Mansano; "the tyranny of that pedant has driven me from the seat of learning. I was induced, for the first time, to absent myself from college, and although I publicly asked pardon before the whole class for my fault, the inflexible tyrant, to gratify the vindictive disposition of his mind, issued an order of castigation. Upon my resisting his authority, he sent his myrmidons to seize me by force; but although I closed in with them, my courage could do little more in the unequal contest, than to give them marks of my prowess upon the face and shins, which they afterwards repaid by lashes on my back with usurious interest. Since that day," continued Mansano, "I have never entered the college; but to relieve my poor parents from the burden of maintaining me, have accepted a place in the household of the Bishop of Salamanca, a prelate of extraordinary merit and large revenues, who supports the dignity of his see with the liberality of a prince. The hospitality of his table, to which company of the first character and distinction daily resort, is unbounded;—a single meal would support an hospital for three days; and the condition of his domestics, who scarcely do anything but drink, eat, play, and sleep, is truly happy; for, after having experienced a pleasing servitude of nine or ten years, a handsome provision is made for them for the remainder of their lives."

I congratulated Mansano on his good fortune,

and wished him a good morning. Meditating profoundly on the nature of his employment, and the felicity which he had so impressively described, I regretted that I had not requested his interest to introduce me to the service of so kind a master. But upon recollection, the voice of ambition whispered in my ear, that the son of a graduated physician ought to entertain more elevated notions, and a conflict between those common associates, pride and poverty, succeeded. At length, the impending indigence which threatened me, determined my choice. I accordingly hastened the ensuing morning to the episcopal palace, and inquiring for Mansano, informed him of the motive of my visit.

"Every department in the bishop's service," said he, "is at present filled; but his nephew, Don Christoval de Gaviria, who resides in the palace, is, I know, in want of a valet; and if you please, I will speak in your behalf to the major-domo, who I think on my recommendation will immediately place you in the service of the young lord. Call on me again tomorrow, and I will then inform you whether you may expect this promotion, which will be extremely advantageous; for Don Christoval is the most generous young man existing; and it will, I assure you, contribute greatly to my happiness, to have the man my companion in the palace who was my comrade at the college."

Although it was now a long time since I had seen Signora Dalsa and her niece, yet I had profited so much by their examples, that I was not sparing in expressions of civility to Mansano. Anxious for the event of this negotiation, as the object of it was the

very situation I wished to obtain, I returned the ensuing day to the palace; and my friend had conducted this business with so much ability, that I found the major-domo not only prepossessed in my favour, but eager to introduce me to Don Christoval, who immediately received me into his service.

CHAPTER V.

*THE KIND OF SERVICE WHICH VANILLO FOLLOWED WITH
DON CHRISTOVAL DE GAVARIA, AND THE INDISCRE-
TION THAT CAUSED HIM TO BE DISCHARGED.*

BEHOLD me, after having served two years as an apprentice to a surgeon, and attended ten months as a student in the university, now acting as valet to Don Christoval de Gavaria !

This young nobleman, who had just attained the twenty-fifth year of his age, possessed so elegant a person, a countenance so open, and such very conciliating manners, that I felt an immediate attachment to him ; but perhaps the high degree of satisfaction which he expressed on the first sight of me, contributed rather more than his person and manners to inspire me with favourable sentiments of his character.

The bishop, who enjoyed the satisfaction of having educated him himself, was extremely fond of his nephew, who having been recently released from the restraints of his governor, was now entirely free, and at liberty to follow his inclinations, without rendering an account of his conduct to any person. This emancipation from all responsibility or restraint exactly suited Don Christoval's disposition ; and he made good use of the inestimable privilege ; for the fair sex being the object of his fondest pursuits, he seized with an ardent inclination every opportunity which raised a hope of gallantry or intrigue. An old, grave, religious *vallet-de-chambre* and myself

composed his household establishment; but as I appeared the better qualified to serve him as an agent in his amorous pursuits, the honour of the caduceus was bestowed upon me. He certainly required a more experienced ferret than I was to hunt out beauties for him; but, as he chose me for his confidant, he without doubt concluded that I should soon be as fit as any other for the service. "Vanillo," said he to me one day, "I feel an affection for you, and as an irrefragable proof of it, listen to me while I disclose to you the secrets of my heart." I bowed with profound humility, to testify how sensibly I felt the honour he conferred on me. "Know," continued he, "that by the mediation of one of those old women who go about counting the rosary in order the more commodiously to offer at the shrine of beauty the homages of love, I have formed an acquaintance with the most amiable woman in Salamanca; and although I have only seen her once, I burn with impatience to renew my visits. Go," said he, putting a paper into my hand, "go, find out the old procuress; her name is La Pepita; here is her address; tell her from me that I languish in the expectation of a second interview with the charming idol to whom she introduced me." This last expression convinced me that Don Christoval was far gone in love, and, to assimilate my zeal to the fervency of his feelings, I flew with rapidity to the dwelling of La Pepita, whom I found at her retreat in a small obscure court close adjoining to the convent of the Cordeliers. To form a true idea of this antiquated sorceress, figure to your mind an ugly hag of seventy-two years of age, about three feet six inches high, entire skin and bone, with eyes redder than fire, and a mouth the lower lip of

which protruded so as entirely to conceal its companion, and you will form a faint portrait of La Pepita. She received me in a room on the ground-floor, which, though dark and dirty, was no doubt frequently the asylum of love and beauty. Having opened my commission, the accommodating old creature addressed me in these words: "My young friend, you may assure Don Christoval that he may see the lady he loves at this house to-night, although this cannot be accomplished without great difficulty, as she will be obliged to escape from the observation of a brother who superintends her conduct, and whose vigilance it will not be an easy matter to elude."

"These are obstacles which my master has sagaciously foreseen," replied I; "here is something from him that will enable you to remove them," putting a purse containing fifty pistoles into her hand.

"I would reject this money with disdain," replied the hag, "if I thought your master had any dis honourable views; but I am satisfied he has too much virtue to entertain any base designs; and from the good opinion I entertain of his character, I will do everything in my power to serve him. To-morrow I will promise him a certain interview with the object of his affection. Go, acquaint him with this information, and leave me to count the rosary, which your interruption prevented me from finishing. Adieu, my chicken," added she, patting me under the chin with her dry hand, "you appear a genteel young man, and by St. Agnes, if I were only in my teens, I should wish to have you for my husband."

I had no sooner disclosed the success of my embassy, than Don Christoval, with a view no doubt to silence the voice of virtue in those delicate duties

which he was likely to impose on me, presented me with a dozen pistoles, assuring me at the same time, that a proper attention to his affairs should never injure my own; and on this assurance I firmly resolved, whatever might be the part I should afterwards be appointed to perform, always to prefer the character of confidant to that of lover, since ruin would in all probability be the consequence of the one, and riches of the other.

The hours passed tediously away in the mind of Don Christoval, until the time of assignation arrived, when, under the friendly cover of the night, we glided unseen unto the habitation of La Pepita. The heroine of the scene, who was already there, I had no opportunity of seeing; for instead of being allowed to follow Don Christoval into the parlour where she was waiting, I was detained by the old woman in an adjoining chamber; but the two rooms being only separated by a thin wainscot partition, I was enabled to overhear a great part of the conversation, which, as will be easily imagined, afforded me for some time high entertainment. But how shall I describe my astonishment when I thought I recollect the voice of the fair female, and, upon a more attentive ear, no longer doubted that it was the deceitful Bernardina! I was quite confounded, and felt my anger rising to a height which reason, at any other time, would not have so easily subdued. "But let the coquette," said I to myself, "affect to love Don Christoval and a thousand other men, what is it to me? I have abandoned her, and her behaviour ought to be no longer interesting to my heart." I could not, however, avoid feeling the keenest mortification on reflecting that a lady, who had always behaved towards me with modesty and

reserve, should at the same time be capable of acting in violation of all chastity ; it mortified my pride by the reflection it cast on my discernment ; and in the moment of spleen and resentment I determined she should see and recollect me before we left the house ; for I fancied the shame and confusion she would feel on discovering that I was privy to the wantonness and duplicity of her conduct would afford me ample revenge. But, alas ! I flattered myself with false hopes ; for when I presented myself to her observation, she was so far from being disconcerted by my presence, that she impudently stared me in the face, and, affecting not to know me, went out with a degree of effrontery which fixed me to the ground with equal astonishment and concern.

Don Christoval, on our return home, having exhausted all his eloquence in boasting to me of his happy fortune, I continued the conversation by assuring him that I rejoiced extremely at the satisfaction he experienced from the company of Bernardino.

"How! Bernardino!" exclaimed my master : "who has informed you that her name is Bernardino ? Do you know her ?"

"Perfectly, sir," replied I, "as well as Signora Dalfa, her aunt ; who, to all appearance, is not better than her niece. In short, sir, I know what both of them are ; and if I had never seen them, I should not perhaps have had the honour of being your valet."

"Vanillo," said Don Christoval, "I desire you would speak openly and without enigma upon this subject."

"There is nothing enigmatical in it, I assure you, sir ; the matter is very clear. I recognised, in the person of the lady you have just seen, my old acquaintance Bernardino, the niece of a deceased

counsellor, whose widow has taken her under her care. I frequented the house of these harpies for near three months, and they induced me to eat away a certain number of pistoles which I had reserved as the means of continuing my studies. But the most mortifying circumstance to my feelings is, that this very Bernardino, this jilt, who finds her way so easily to the house of La Pepita, has imposed upon my inexperience for the sake of my money." I pronounced these last words with a degree of agitation which made Don Christoval laugh. Pleased with the rigours of which I complained, he affected to sympathise with my feelings. "Poor lad!" said he, with an air of raillery, "in truth, Bernardino should not have used a fond lover with so much cruelty. The next time I see her, Vanillo, rest assured I will reproach her with her misconduct." As I was not able to prevent this raillery, I left my master to entertain himself as much as he pleased at my expense, well convinced that the time was not far distant when he would repent of his attachment to so perfidious a woman; a gratification I must infallibly have experienced if I had continued to serve this young lord five or six months longer; but, by the decrees of inevitable fate, or, if you please, by my own misconduct, I was, for reasons which I shall now relate, dismissed from the palace of the bishop two days after.

The sumptuous table of the episcopal palace was almost daily frequented by nobility and gentry of all ranks and distinctions; and in such a concourse it is not surprising that many original characters should occasionally be seen. On the fatal day which removed me from the service of my illustrious friend and master, there appeared at this hospitable board

an old knight who was afflicted with a disorder which is sometimes called *spouting Latin*. He had formerly been at college, and had so stuffed his head by reading the Latin poets, that it might not inaptly be compared to a large library very badly arranged. He cited incessantly divers passages which he had got by heart from the works of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Persius, Tibullus, and Juvenal; and these authors were so confusedly intermingled in his memory, that he frequently attributed the lines of one author to another, and sometimes misquoted the author himself. While I was waiting at table among the other servants of the palace, the old knight's favourite topic was, unhappily both for himself and me, accidentally introduced, and among many other mistakes, he quoted, as from Persius, a passage in Horace. The error was too palpable to escape my notice, and following my vain and vivacious disposition, instead of using the needle and thread which my friend at Molina had given me, I addressed myself with youthful folly to the knight, intimating that the passage he had just quoted was not from Persius but from Horace. Scarcely had I finished the sentence when the enraged Latinist darted his eyes upon me, and replied in a furious tone, "Silence, fellow! I am not to be instructed by a servant." This imperious and scornful reply roused my feelings to an excess. "Why not?" replied I. "It is not because I serve you with wine in the character of a servant that I am not able to assist you with Latin as a man of letters." The whole company, who had been long well disposed to laugh at the absurdities of my adversary, now burst into a roar, and increased the wrath of the enraged knight, who called on Don Christoval to chastise me

for my insolence ; and I was ordered immediately to quit the room. Conceiving that my crime would be expiated by not appearing any more in the presence of this learned retailer of Roman authors, I bowed and obeyed ; but in the evening my master, with much regret, said to me, " My good friend Vanillo, I am extremely mortified by the circumstance which happened at table to-day. Silence would certainly have become you better than so unseasonable a discovery of your knowledge. You have banished yourself from the palace ; for, however deserving of satire and correction the ridiculous propensity of the knight may be, I cannot after this indiscretion, and the injunction he has laid upon me, retain you any longer in my service. He is closely related to my uncle the bishop, and for a variety of reasons we are unwilling to disobey his commands. The peculiar cast of his character renders him inexorable upon every occasion in which he thinks the honour of his erudition is impeached ; and if I were to suffer this night to pass without discharging you, he would never forgive me. I am reduced therefore to the painful necessity of desiring you to leave the palace. I shall however still retain my affection for you, and to afford you some consolation," continued he, " I beg you will accept these thirty pistoles. With this assistance you will be enabled to live until you find another place."

Don Christoval, in pronouncing these words, put a purse containing thirty pistoles into my hand. I thanked my kind master for these testimonies of his affection, and knowing that I could only impute my loss of his service to my own indiscretion, I immediately put off the livery of a servant, and resuming once more the habit of a student, departed from the palace.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONDUCT OF VANILLO AFTER HIS DISMISSION FROM THE SERVICE OF DON CHRISTOVAL, AND BY WHAT ACCIDENT HE ENTERED INTO THE SERVICE OF THE LICENTIATE SALABLANCA, DEAN OF THE CATHEDRAL OF SALAMANCA. A DESCRIPTION OF THE SINGULAR CHARACTER OF THIS ECCLESIASTIC.

RETURNING, the same evening, to my old lodgings I again hired them upon a new agreement, until an opportunity should offer of entering into the service of another master; for having hitherto only experienced its pleasures, I have made up my mind to continue in servitude. In the neighbourhood of my lodgings, there was a hotel, frequented by a superior kind of company, particularly ecclesiastics, where I usually dined and spent my evenings. Among other persons, who resorted to this house was a chorister belonging to the cathedral, named Vanegas, with whom I formed an intimate acquaintance. He was a fat, chubby man, about thirty years of age, extremely lively in his conversation, and of a disposition so congenial to my own, that we felt a pleasure in each other's company from the first moment. "May I venture to ask you," said he to me one day, "what are the objects of your pursuit at Salamanca?"

"I am at present," replied I, "totally out of employment. About eight days ago, I was the valet of Don Christoval, nephew to the bishop

of this city, but a misquotation of a few lines in Horace occasioned my being discharged."

"Is it possible?" cried the chorister with astonishment; "tell me the particulars of this event." I related to him all the circumstances that had passed; and when I repeated the passage which had raised the anger of the knight, he shook every table in the room by the loudness of his laughter; for his tones were naturally so sonorous, that whether he sung, cried, or laughed, his voice resembled more the bass of an organ than a human sound. Having indulged his mirth for some time, he became serious, and assuring me he would use his utmost endeavours to procure me a good place, was not long in performing his promise. "My friend Vanillo," said he the succeeding day, "I have found out a situation for you, which, in my opinion, is preferable to that you have left. The Licentiate Salablanca, Dean of our cathedral, has occasion for a person who can act in the double capacity of secretary and servant; and I think you will not acquit yourself badly in these employments."

"I trust," replied I, "that I shall be able to discharge my duties with great satisfaction to the Dean, if you will only make me acquainted with his character."

"He is a man," replied Vanegas, "between fifty and sixty years of age, of unaffected piety; not, like other devotees, austere in his manners, but mild, affable, and cheerful; and inclined to repay a sincere attachment with unlimited confidence and esteem. After dinner," continued he, "we will wait on him, for I would not lose a moment's time in

placing you with this venerable ecclesiastic, whose preferments in the church amount to more than a thousand crowns a year."

Vanegas accordingly conducted me to a small but elegant mansion, the residence of the Licentiate Salablanca. "Sir," said he to the Dean, "I beg leave to introduce the young man I mentioned to you, Vanillo Gonzales, who is descended from a good family, but being left an orphan early in life, is reduced to the necessity of servitude. He has passed through the third class of the university with success, and possesses honour, good sense, and integrity. I will answer for him, for he is my particular friend, and I am persuaded you will think him a treasure."

"And I am sure," replied the Dean, "he cannot have a better friend. A good servant is a valuable present: I am indebted to you for recommending him, and I receive him into my service the more readily because his appearance prepossesses me in his favour."

The chorister, who was extremely pleased at the success of his recommendation, took his leave of the Dean, and left me to obey his commands. "Well, my young friend," said my new patron immediately, "we are going, Heaven be praised, to live together. I hope you are not ignorant of the duties which servants owe to their masters. I am sensible on my part of the attention which masters should always pay to their servants. Let each of us rigidly perform what is respectively required of us, and we shall grow in affection as our years advance: consider me in the character of a father, and I shall treat you as if you were my

own son." At these words I threw myself at his feet, with earnest protestations that every endeavour on my part should be exerted to merit his kindness. He raised me up, when changing the subject, "Vanillo," said he, "you are no longer in an Episcopal palace; you have passed from one extreme to the other. You will see neither delicacies nor profusion at my table. You are now in the service of an ecclesiastic of only the second order. At dinner I am contented with a single dish, and my supper consists of the lightest food." The Licentiate, having finished his discourse, desired me to pack up my necessaries and bring them to the deanery; an order which I executed without delay.

The Dean, on my return home, was at supper in the parlour, entertaining himself in familiar conversation with his two other domestics who were waiting on him. One of them was his cook, very diminutive in stature, antiquated in appearance, and deformed in person; the other was his housekeeper, whose appearance, age, and ugliness, had rendered extremely canonical. I mixed occasionally in the conversation; and to commence my functions, went to the side-board, on which stood a bottle of port, a decanter of water, and a large glass, which I filled and presented to my master every time he called for it, in a way which showed that I had learned to perform the office of cup-bearer from the hand of a master. The light food on which the Dean supped that evening was a shoulder of mutton, of which indeed he ate very little; and soon afterwards retired to his chamber, leaving the cook, the housekeeper, and myself, to eat our supper

together uninterruptedly in the parlour. I soon rendered myself familiar with my companions, and did not fail to afford them an opportunity, during our conversation, of expressing their sentiments of the Dean. "How happy are we, my friends," said I, "to have such a master; so kind and benevolent! Does he always converse with the same affability as he did this evening? Has he not occasionally whims, caprices, and ill-humoured moments?"

"No," replied the distorted cook, "his temper is always the same. At certain periods indeed he appears quite melancholy and dejected, but it seldom lasts long, and his servants never suffer by it. I have," continued the cook, "served other pious men of a very different character. God knows the sufferings I endured in the service of a Canon of Toledo, who, though a man of great wealth, was by nature of so violent a temper, that he has frequently thrown a whole fricassee at my head when it did not happen to be seasoned to his palate."

"Thank Heaven," exclaimed Leonella (which was the name of the housekeeper), "our master, the Dean, has no fault. Some people, indeed, accuse him of being avaricious, but, although he is a churchman, they may perhaps be mistaken. Instead of hoarding his money, as they imagine, he perhaps distributes it secretly among the poor, which is the proper way of being truly charitable; for it is better to do good privately than to trumpet one's actions to the world." To these observations many others of a similar kind were added; from which I concluded that I was in the service of an Israelite indeed, with whom I should pass my days in comfort.

As a shoulder of mutton has not much about it to amuse and entertain for any length of time three persons of excellent appetites, our supper was soon over, and I repaired to the chamber of the Dean, whom I found kneeling on the floor before a large ivory crucifix, enshrined with ebony, and lined with black velvet. Having finished his prayer, he rose from the ground, and as I perceived he was disposed to go to rest, I offered to assist him in undressing, begging, that as I had not been long used to servitude, he would excuse me if I did not acquit myself so adroitly as I could wish. I was not, however, so awkward as I pretended to be, for I had had great opportunities of learning everything which my duty required in the service of Don Christoval.

While I was performing this task, the Licentiate asked me many questions respecting my family, and conceiving, from my answers, that I was not born to be a valet, he seemed to lament my fate. "Unfortunate Vanillo," said he, "how sincerely I regret that you lost at so early a period of your life the authors of your existence. If it had not been for this misfortune, you would not now, perhaps, have been in this dependent condition. But since Heaven has so ordered it, my friend, you must submit without murmuring to its decrees. I will endeavour," continued he, "as far as it is in my power, to soften the rigours of servitude, by treating you in a way that shall scarcely render you sensible that you have a master."

Charmed by these professions, I felt my bosom suddenly inspired with so much zeal and affection for my kind protector, that I could willingly have

met death to serve him; a pregnant proof that is always in the power of a master to secure the fidelity and affection of his servant. His kind promises penetrated so deeply into my heart, that I addressed myself to him in a speech, the broken accents of which must have convinced him that however deficient I might be in eloquence, I was by no means so in feeling and moral sentiment. When I had finished, he tapped me softly on the shoulder, saying, with a smile, "Go, my young friend, go to your rest. I have every reason to think that we shall agree perfectly well with each other. Your predecessor had only fifteen pistoles a year; but I will give you twenty, as a testimony of the satisfaction with which I receive you into my service."

Leaving the Dean to enjoy the comforts of repose, I retired to an adjoining chamber, which he used as his wardrobe, where I found a bed nearly as uneasy as that at Doctor Canizares', on which I passed the night in perturbed repose. To show, however, that indolence was not among the number of my faults, I rose at the break of day; so that when the Dean, who was a very early riser, called me, I presented myself before him dressed and ready to receive his commands. "I observe," said he, "you are not disposed to sleep long in the morning; I like you the better for it. Here," continued he, putting a piece of paper into my hand, "is an order for two hundred crowns, which, to convince you of the confidence I repose in you, you will carry immediately to Don Juan de Barros, the receiver-general of the chapter, and bring me the money for it." I went accordingly to the house of the receiver-general, and

executed my commission in a way that afforded great satisfaction to the Dean, and I became every day a greater favourite.

I had been near a month in this service, when, one evening, as I was waiting at supper, I perceived the Dean drop suddenly into a profound reverie. Instead of conversing and laughing with his servants with his usual affability, he was quite silent. I ventured to speak to him two or three times, but he answered me only with sighs, and appeared so oppressed with sorrow, that it was evident a secret torment was preying on his heart. The supper, of which he scarcely ate a morsel, being over, he retired to his chamber, and, dispensing with my attendance, locked the door. "This is, without doubt," said I to the little cook, "one of those desponding moments to which you alluded."

"Yes," replied the cook, "you now see how different our patron is from himself; but these clouds of discontent soon pass away, and to-morrow you will find him in possession of his usual gaiety."

Satisfied that this prediction would be verified, we continued our supper in the parlour with accustomed cheerfulness, and when it was finished retired to our beds; but while I lay extended upon mine, and sleep was preparing to close my eyes, a voice like that of my master struck upon my ear; and, listening with all possible attention, I heard him walking with agitation across his chamber, in sorrowful soliloquy on the subject which depressed his soul. Although I endeavoured in vain to hear distinctly what he said, I caught occasionally certain particular expressions, from which I conjectured that it was some delicacy of conscience which thus disturbed his repose; and

I also heard the sound of many blows of discipline which he inflicted on his body, and probably not without sufficient cause; in this manner he continued to walk, talk, beat, and torment himself, during the remainder of the night.

The ensuing day, rising at his usual hour, he went, without taking any notice of what had passed, into the city, from whence he returned in about three hours, with an air of gaiety and composure, which astonished me the more, as I expected to see him deep in mortification, and desired me to attend him to his chamber, when, locking the door the moment I went in, "O Vanillo!" exclaimed he, "I must make you the partaker of my joy. I will deposit all the secrets of my soul in your faithful bosom. Know, then, that I have just achieved an important and glorious victory."

"You require, sir," said I, with gaiety equal to his own, "that I should rejoice in your success, although I am yet ignorant of what it consists."

"I have vanquished and dislodged," said he, "the demon of avarice! I had amassed three hundred crowns, which I enclosed with anxious care in that chest, and my soul was attached only to my treasure; but it has pleased the heavenly Father to look with an eye of pity on His servant; He has stretched forth His hand to save me. I have this morning poured all my money into the poor-box of the hospital, and by this means have relieved my mind from the heavy burden that oppressed it."

You may easily conceive that this discourse, while it filled me with astonishment, gave me no very favourable opinion of my master's understanding; and, discovering by my countenance the opinion I entertained, he endeavoured to make me think more

favourably of his conduct, by continuing his discourse in the following manner: "Know, my good friend, that I was born a miser, and feel a passion for gold which my morality is continually combating without being able to destroy. When I have no more money than is absolutely necessary to buy food, and defray the ordinary expenses of my household, my mind is tranquil and serene; but the moment I acquire any superfluous wealth, I forget that it is the property of the poor. I lock it up; I hide it; it becomes the idol of my soul: the lust of wealth fires my mind; I heap hoard upon hoard; and, in short, surrender myself entirely to the dominion of this furious passion. But although avarice is triumphant, it does not long enjoy its victory. Charity soon interposes to vindicate her injured claims, and to dispute the prize that avarice has obtained. Then it is that I feel my soul torn by conflicting passions, which plunge me into deep distress and melancholy; and I am fearful that vice would on these occasions frequently prove completely victorious, if Heaven did not interpose its aid to preserve my virtue; but, thanks to the Divine Goodness, I have always hitherto been able to bring my enemy to the ground."

The conscientious divine, charmed with his recent victory, having in this manner unburdened his mind, and exhibited new transports at having so happily relieved himself of three hundred crowns, prostrated himself before his crucifix, to return thanks to the Almighty for having given him strength to perform this noble action; where this pious man, for so in truth he was, continued a quarter of an hour in fervent prayer. The effusions of his grateful heart

affected me, and I could not avoid esteeming his heroic virtue. When he rose the smiles of joy beamed on his countenance. "Vanillo," said he, "I am now more happy and contented than language can express. If you could conceive the secret satisfaction I feel in being released from the tyranny of avarice, I am persuaded that from this moment you would follow my example. Let me exhort you, my friend, to the glorious achievement; and if you have more money than your immediate necessities require, carry it, my good friend, to the hospital, and by this means check the first growth of that passion which may insensibly lead you to the love of riches."

I could not help smiling at the advice which the Dean thus piously gave me; but, although a good casuist might have raised considerable doubts as to my right of possession, I was not easily persuaded to part with my pistoles. "Sir," replied I to the Licentiate, "if I were in possession of a benefice which produced more than my necessities required, I should endeavour, inimitable as your conduct is, to follow your example; but consider for a moment, that I am only a poor servant without patrimony, or any other provision than about twenty pistoles, which I saved in my former service; and can I, without being guilty of imprudence, part with them? It is impossible to foresee what may happen. If, for instance, some misfortune should deprive me of my present situation, and a long time should intervene before I found a new master, should not I subject myself to the reproaches of my own conscience, in having been so improvidently charitable?"

"These sentiments," replied the Dean, "would

be founded in good sense, if we were warranted in making provision against the exigencies of futurity ; but we should take no thought of to-morrow, nor should the fear of want serve as a pretence for depriving the poor of their right to our superfluous wealth." These refined sentiments produced no effect upon my mind ; I kept my pistoles, and forgot the advice.

About two months subsequent to this conversation, which the Dean charged me not to reveal to the other servants, he again sent me to the office of the receiver-general, to touch another two hundred crowns, which I brought and delivered to him as before. He put them carefully into the fatal coffer, and kept them during a period of three weeks, without appearing to be the least affected. Soon afterwards, however, the tranquillity of his mind was visibly disturbed, and at length by degrees he discovered symptoms of approaching melancholy. The moment I perceived his situation, I addressed him in these words : "Sir, as I have the honour to be your confidant, I conceive it to be my duty to afford you assistance, although you have not signified the want of it ; for I am but too well informed of what is at present passing in your mind. Avarice and charity are there at variance, and the event of the contest is uncertain. Permit, therefore, a faithful servant, who is deeply interested in your happiness, to offer you a clue by which you may extricate your mind from the painful labyrinth in which it is involved."

"Yes, my dear Vanillo," replied the afflicted Dean, "I struggle night and day against this powerful fiend, which seems to acquire new strength in pro-

portion as mine diminishes. Aid me, if it be in your power, to expel the monster from my heart."

"Most willingly, sir," replied I; "and we will, if you please, drag him directly from his den."

"Alas!" said the Licentiate, "by what means can this possibly be accomplished?"

"Nothing is more easy," replied I. "Deliver instantly into my hands these formidable coins, which otherwise will soon destroy your peace of mind, and I will deliver you from the impending danger, by casting them into the charity-box for the poor, which is placed at the portal of St. Bernard's Monastery."

The Dean did not immediately acquiesce in the proposed expedient; but, by degrees, the reflection of the moralist overcame the emotions of the miser. "I consent, my friend," said he; "I invest you with this commission; you will save me from feeling the pangs I should endure in carrying and parting with the money myself." The Dean accordingly drew from his coffer a large bag, and putting it into my hands, "There," said he, "there are the victims I mean to immolate. There, my good friend, run, fly, return immediately, and announce to me that the sacrifice is performed."

I instantly quitted the Dean, who could not help venting a sorrowful sigh at my departure from the room, or rather at seeing his beloved victims carried to the altar. I took the road which leads to St. Bernard's Monastery, with intention faithfully to execute the commission I was entrusted with. It is impossible for man to possess an honester mind than that with which I first undertook this dangerous charge; and certain it is, that I should have executed the trust with fidelity, if the demon of avarice,

who, in malicious anger at having been defeated by the master, was, no doubt, determined to be revenged on his man, had not tempted me. He stopped me suddenly just as I was entering into the church porch, and whispered in my ear, "Vanillo, where are you going, like a simpleton as you are? What! carry water to a river that already overflows? Do you imagine that the members of the hospital are in want? You are deceived, Vanillo. Its coffers are so amply filled by the charitable donations of the rich, that the kettles of the poor are always boiling. Their revenues daily increase by the bequests of dying sinners. Besides, their wealth, unlike the wealth of others, is in no danger of being pillaged by the hands of greedy stewards. Their revenues are preserved by men who take a pleasure in protecting their interests for the love of God, without the hope or expectation of advantage or reward. Do not then throw away a useful sum of money which good fortune has put into your hands. Rather keep it yourself. You will hereafter, perhaps, have occasion for it. Besides, as the Dean has devoted it to the use of the poor, a portion of it at least is your right; and if there were any fault in appropriating the whole to yourself, this consideration will render it less."

The artful devil, by putting these wicked notions into my mind in the shape of sound reasons, corrupted my integrity. Instead of entering the church, I directed my steps towards the Great Square, where, for a trifling discount, a banker soon converted the silver into gold, by changing the crowns into doubloons and quadruples, which I conveniently concealed in my pocket, and returned to the Dean, who was waiting for me with impatient anxiety.

"Congratulate yourself, sir," said I, accosting him with a lively air, "the deed is done; the fish are in their proper element; and your mind may now resume its tranquillity."

"I am glad it is over," replied the Dean. "I thank you for your assistance; and you also, my friend, have occasion to rejoice, since you have so materially contributed to the accomplishment of this great work."

"I feel great pleasure," replied I, "in the part I have taken; and I flatter myself that if you should hereafter have the misfortune to relapse, you will have recourse to the simple medicine which I have so successfully prescribed." The Dean assured me that he had no other intention.

In a few months afterwards, however, finding himself possessed of another superfluous sum, and of course tormented by similar scruples of conscience, he had recourse to another mode of relief. He purchased a large number of learned works upon morals and divinity, and hoped by this bargain entirely to lull his perturbed spirit. But, one day, after having remained a long time in profound meditation at the feet of his crucifix, he called me to him. I ran with anxiety towards him, and observing that he was more agitated and troubled than ever, said, "My dear master, how do you do? Have you again occasion to employ me in any pious undertaking?"

"Ah! Vanillo," replied he, uttering a deep sigh, "it is a subtle crafty demon. I fondly hoped that I had eluded his snares; but, alas! I find that he has again entrapped me. I conceived, that by purchasing these books, Charity would have no reason

to be discontented. Fatal illusion! These works, excellent as they are, are useless, for I have no time to read them; my leisure hours are all employed in prayer. Why then, unhappy man, did I make such a purchase? How many charitable deeds might I have performed with the money which these volumes cost me, and which now only serve to decorate my study with useless ostentation!"

The mind of this too charitable ecclesiastic was so deeply affected in having made a purchase from motives which now appeared to him to be criminal, that he was almost disconsolate. A confidential friend is frequently enabled to afford useful advice.

"The fault you have been guilty of, sir," said I, "is not irreparable. You may still, with deference to your better opinion, return these books to the bookseller from whom you purchased them. He will take them back at a moderate deduction, and then I can go immediately to the hospital with the money they produce."

"Your advice," exclaimed the Dean, "is like inspiration. I will follow it immediately." He accordingly ordered me to fetch a number of porters, which I did, with an alacrity the cause of which it is not necessary to explain. There was, however, one circumstance in this transaction which vexed me extremely. My patron resolved to accompany me to the bookseller, who, as it happened, was the very librarian who knew so well how to recommend boarding-houses of hospitality.

Although traders in general are not very well satisfied to take back goods they have once sold, the old librarian very obligingly received back the

books, and repaid the Dean one hundred and fifty crowns out of the two hundred he had received for them, contenting himself with the residue to recompense himself as well for certain opportunities he had lost of selling them to a greater advantage, as for interest of his money from the time the purchase had been made. I immediately laid hold of the money, and tied it up in a bag which the librarian gratuitously lent on the occasion. As we were walking along the street, I endeavoured to induce the Dean to return home, where I promised to rejoin him in a short time; but he still continued his intention to accompany me to the hospital. "How, sir," exclaimed I, "do you doubt the integrity of your faithful servant?"

"Heaven forbid," said he. "No, my good friend, I am convinced of your fidelity; my only reason for wishing to accompany you is, that I may be an eye-witness of the victory I obtain; but, since my company may import a suspicion, I will show you that you misconceive my motives. Go, and achieve alone an object so pleasing in the sight of Heaven."

In saying these words, he turned immediately towards the deanery, and I turned soon after towards the dwelling of the money-changer, where I again converted my silver into double pistoles.

My purse, as you will imagine, became plump and round; and in the hope of swelling it to a larger size, by a longer continuance at the deanery, I felt myself the happiest man in Spain. But, alas! a sorrowful event disappointed my expectations. The Dean, a few days after the books were disposed of, fell ill, and the most celebrated physicians of Salamanca being called in to assist him, he took their prescriptions, and—

died! No sooner were his eyes closed than the numerous relations he had in the city flocked with eagerness to the deanery, confident of finding a hoard of wealth in the coffers of the deceased ; and it is impossible to describe their astonishment on discovering only the few crowns that had been reserved for the expenses of the house. In answer to their complaints, I told them it was no wonder the Licentiate should leave so little behind him, since he had, in pursuance of his favourite creed, that "all superfluous wealth belonged to the poor," regularly carried his to the coffers of the hospital. The relations, dissatisfied with the slender inheritance, divided what remained among themselves, leaving me, by a sort of divination of the prompt payment I had made to myself, scarcely sufficient to satisfy one-half of the wages that were due to me. This deficiency, therefore, must be deducted from the portion I received by the good works of my pious master.

CHAPTER VIII.

VANILLO QUILTS SALAMANCA, AND VISITS MADRID. THE ADVENTURE HE MET WITH ON THE ROAD, AND THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH IT PRODUCED.

THE city of Madrid had so frequently been spoken of in my hearing as the wonder of the world, that I felt a great desire to visit this celebrated metropolis. The present situation of my affairs enabled me not only to gratify my wishes with ease and pleasure, but to appear in a higher and more respectable character than that of a valet. I flattered myself that a young man who was tolerably well versed in literary compositions, and not deficient in understanding, could not fail making his fortune at court, either by attaching himself to great men, or insinuating himself into confidence among the clerks of the secretaries of state. In short, filled with a high opinion of my own merit, I immediately purchased a fine mule, in order to render my entry more graceful, and departed at the break of the ensuing day for Madrid.

I directed my course towards Peneranda, where I arrived in safety the same evening. But I was far, alas ! from continuing in safety on the ensuing day. On entering the province of Old Castile, I observed two roads, and not perceiving any person of whom I could inquire their course, I was obliged, after many fruitless conjectures and much embarrassment, to trust to chance. The one road led to the city of Avila, the other to Segovia ; and as a punishment for my manifold offences, as you will find by the sequel, mischance

directed me to take the last. It conducted me between two lofty mountains, by a route which was sufficient of itself to alarm a traveller even with empty pockets. If I had possessed a proper knowledge of the country, I might easily have avoided, by a circuitous path, this dangerous passage, which was never attempted to be travelled except by such as were ignorant of its dangers ; for, exclusive of the dreadful precipices by which it was surrounded, there appeared at the feet of the mountains great excavations, one beyond another, which it was impossible to behold without affright. Expecting every moment to see armed assassins issue from these frightful caverns, overpowered by the phantoms of imagination, and feeling that not only my life, but the property of the poor, was endangered in this terrifying place, my limbs trembled every step I went ; and I implored the aid of Heaven, without once reflecting that I merited rather dereliction than assistance. I was soon convinced of the justice of its decrees. Two men (vomited, as it were, from one of the caverns) suddenly appeared before me, and by their ferocious aspects, and the tremendous sabres which they brandished in their hands, congealed the blood that pressed around my heart ; their bodies also were half naked ; and fear, which always enlarges the size of the objects that create it, made me conceive them of enormous stature. These two new-born natives of the earth, by placing themselves directly in front of my mule, obstructed my further progress ; and, with their hats in their hands, asked charity, in a manner which rendered it impossible to refuse their request. The humility of their supplication, however, did not in any degree lessen the horrors of their aspects ; and I threw

to them a few pieces of silver coin, which I had been advised at Peneranda to carry loose in my pocket, in order to avoid the dangers to which the exhibiting of gold in my journey might expose me. But the two beggars, far from being contented with this liberal donation, seized the bridle of my mule, and declared that I should not get off at so cheap a rate. "Young gentleman," exclaimed one of them, dragging me from the mule, and throwing me violently to the ground, "we must see in what manner your purse is lined."

They accordingly rifled my pockets, and took from my purse above a hundred pistoles; but observing that I appeared more dead than alive, they protested, by way of comfort, that they did not mean to do me any harm; and this assurance dispelled at least one portion of my fears. This ceremony was scarcely ended before I observed, issuing from the mouth of the same cave, a number consisting of at least sixty men and women, some on foot, and others on mules, or asses; this honest group was a banditti of Bohemian robbers. The men wore short cloaks, with under garments, so torn and ragged that they did not everywhere conceal the skin. Some of the women were whimsically ornamented with gold collars, silver medals, and rich bracelets; the others had only a simple covering from the waist to the feet; the upper parts of their bodies around the neck and shoulders remaining naked, in defiance of all modesty, but perfectly in character with themselves. The two robbers who had so completely emptied my pockets ordered me, on pain of death, immediately to join the cavalcade, which filed off two by two. We descended from the mountain at a distance of two or three hundred paces from the cave, and crossing a large

plain, entered a thick wood, through the middle of which ran a stream of clear water, where the troop halted ; and I could have enjoyed the beauties of the surrounding scenery with pleasure, if I had been in more agreeable company. The men busied themselves in spreading upon the mossy turf various refreshments of food, as well as wine, which they carried in calabashes, after the manner of the pilgrims of St. James, and seemed to possess in great abundance. I was forced to eat and drink with them in spite of my want of appetite; for the moment I showed the least repugnance to conform to their manners, they clapped their hands on their sabres, and by this means rendered me as pliant as a glove. I became, indeed, so docile, as to suffer them to take off my clothes, which were of excellent cloth, and quite new, and array me in one of the habits of the order ; for they always carried a certain number with them, which they forced such young gentlemen as had the misfortune to fall into their hands, to put on.

After indulging themselves in eating and drinking for three or four hours, the men and women began to dance in a style certainly more free than graceful. A savage mirth everywhere prevailed ; and it was resolved to pass the night under those delightful shades, when two of their companions, who had been placed as sentinels at a certain distance, arrived, and disturbed the festivity of the troop, by announcing that a brigade of the holy brotherhood was at the distance of only thirty paces from the wood. Relying upon their superior numbers, this information did not appear to create the least alarm ; but each, even of the least courageous, calmly prepared himself to receive the enemy. A single brigade would, in all

probability, have been too feeble to conquer so large a band of robbers, the majority of whom was both vigorous and valiant. But while the banditti were marching with high contempt of the inferiority of their pursuers, a second brigade of the holy brotherhood having skirted the wood on the other side, closed on their rear, and placed them between two fires ; and the robbers, finding themselves thus situated, lost all hope of victory, and endeavoured to seek safety by a precipitate flight. The consternation was so great, that, without reflecting on the consequences, I followed the fugitives with as much alacrity as if I had had no occasion to rejoice in being thus delivered from their power. The two brigades pursued us so closely that we were almost entirely taken prisoners ; and the conquerors tying us together with cords they had brought with them for the purpose, divided us into two companies, one of which was driven to Avila, and the other to Segovia. It may be necessary to inform the reader that the magistrates of these cities, having been informed that a daring banditti infested the neighbouring country with impunity, had each of them despatched a brigade of archers of the holy fraternity to apprehend them ; and so well was the measure concerted that each of them arrived at the wood at the same time.

I was among those who were sent to Avila, where on our arrival we were immediately secured in dark and dismal dungeons, to await the approach of inexorable and speedy justice. The Corregidor, an expeditious judge, came to the prison on the following day to take our examinations, and my lucky stars directed him to begin with me. Struck with the appearance of my youth—

"Unhappy young man," said he, "you have begun the career of vice at a very early age indeed."

"Sir," replied I calmly, "it is not the cowl that creates the monk. It is true I wear the garb of a robber; but I assure you most solemnly I do not belong to the gang."

"Where is the next?" said the Corregidor, without deigning to hear my defence.

Turning to the other prisoners who were confined in the dungeon with me, he inquired whether they were among the troop who were apprehended in the wood by the holy brethren; and they, rightly conceiving that it would be of no service to assert the contrary, answered in the affirmative. On receiving this answer the magistrate closed his inquiries, and ordered the notary who accompanied him to write down our names, assuring us as he quitted the prison that we should not languish long in confinement, for that in two hours at most we should learn our fate. Perceiving that this minister of justice intended to pronounce me guilty, I called upon him loudly to hear me.

"Take care, sir, I beseech you, what you do. Do not confound the innocent with the guilty. So far from being one of this gang of robbers, I declare to you that I am myself the victim of their depredations; they robbed me of my money and my mule; forcibly took off my clothes; and, in spite of all resistance, obliged me to put on the dress I now wear."

The Corregidor seemed to pay very little attention to this address, and in about an hour afterwards the Register returned to the prison.

"Where is Vanillo Gonzales?" said he, with gaiety, as he entered the dungeon.

"Here!" exclaimed I, imagining he had brought an order for my discharge; "what news have you for him?"

"Very good news," replied the Register, "for which I shall not charge him anything, any more than for the expenses of his trial, which is just finished. He is condemned," added this sorry jester, "to die upon the scaffold, and make retribution with his feet dancing in the air."

The tone of raillery, and the easy manner in which the Register communicated this sentence, made me conjecture that it was not true; but the words he afterwards used to the companions of my captivity left me no longer in doubt of the certainty of my fate. My affliction knew no bounds. I vented a torrent of tears, and made the dungeon echo to my cries and lamentations.

"Why," said I, addressing myself to the robbers, "wicked as you are, why will you not save the life of a man you know to be innocent? It is yet in your power, by solemnly declaring to the Corregidor that I was not one of the gang. What advantage will you gain by suffering me to perish?"

I hoped, by these reproaches, to affect the feelings of the villains I addressed, and induce them to bear witness of my innocence; but, instead of doing me this justice, they burst into loud laughter, and ridiculed my fears.

The Register, who was present during this scene, but without appearing to listen to what I said, took me by the hand, and leading me into a large hall presented me to a monk of the order of St. Francis, who, I concluded, had not come there to do nothing.

"Here, holy father," said the Register, "you may

begin your work with this youth ; induce him to confess, and prepare his mind for an approaching journey to the other world."

Throwing myself at the feet of the Cordelier, I implored his protection with great energy, and related to him with fidelity everything that had passed between the robbers and myself; but the Register though he heard this account, went away without uttering a syllable, and left me with the confessor, and the executioner standing by his side.

" My friend," replied the Cordelier, " suppose for a moment the adventure you have related be true, it proves to my mind that your manifold iniquities have drawn upon you the wrath of Heaven ; for divine justice frequently uses human tribunals as the instruments to punish incorrigible sinners. Instead, therefore, of murmuring at the sentence which has condemned you to die, and which seems to you unjust, you ought to regard it as the means by which Heaven is about to chastise your crimes. Let me persuade you, therefore, to employ the few moments you have to live in sincerely confessing your sins, and imploring the forgiveness of an offended Deity."

The eloquence of the Cordelier, great as it was, did not induce me quietly to resign myself to the life to come, notwithstanding the holy father spared no pains to procure me a happy exit, and exhorted me in the most pathetic and consolatory manner, mixing with the tears which the idea of suffering drew from me, those which he shed from the interest he took in my heavenly welfare ; but he persisted so steadily, and exerted himself in such a variety of ways, that he at length accomplished his purpose, and I felt my mind suddenly touched with sincere contrition for all

the faults I had committed. My spirit groaned with anguish when I recollect ed the sums I had purloined at Murcia and Salamanca, and, nature yielding by degrees to the awfulness of my situation, I began to think I had merited the ignominious punishment I was about to endure, and became resigned to my miserable fate. But while I was preparing to take my departure to the place of public punishment, where I was doomed to be suspended in the air, the door of the hall suddenly opened, and the Corregidor, accompanied by the Register, and one of the Bohemian prisoners, entered the room.

"Father," said he to the monk, "discontinue your exhortations to that young man; he has suffered sufficiently by the terrors you have inspired. Every individual of the gang in which he was taken has confessed that he was not a member of the confederation, although he wears its uniform. It is not just that his life should be forfeited for being involuntarily among them, a circumstance which it was out of his power to prevent; but, as the inhabitants of Avila have made a grand festival with an intention to memorise the execution of some of these malefactors, here is one of them whom I deliver into your hands to satisfy their expectations."

The Corregidor having spoken these words left the room, and ordered me to follow him, which I most cheerfully obeyed, and surrendered my place to the Bohemian, who was one of the two men that had rifled me of my pistoles. This victim to justice placed himself on his knees before the holy father, and, after being brought to a confession of his crimes, was led to the place of punishment; while the Corregidor conducted me into an adjoining chamber, where,

ceiving that the sudden transition from despair to joy had affected my senses, he ordered the attendants to bring me some wine, and, when I was a little recovered, told me I was free.

The outer doors of the prison were accordingly by his orders immediately opened, and I regained my liberty, but not without the loss of my money, my clothes, and my mule, which had passed from the possession of the robbers into the hands of the officers of justice.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONSOLATION WHICH VANILLO RECEIVED ON BEING RELEASED FROM PRISON, AND THE HAPPIER SITUATION IN WHICH HE FOUND HIMSELF ON HIS ARRIVAL AT MADRID.

THE oddity of my dress exposed me to the derision of the populace as I passed along the street ; but my mind was too deeply impressed by ideas of my happy escape from the clutches of the Bohemians and the Corregidor to be sensible of their mockery. To return my thanks to the Almighty for the deliverance He had vouchsafed to grant me I entered a church, and, retiring to an obscure corner, kneeled down to pray. A sense of the perils I had escaped rendered me fervently devout ; and, promising Heaven to amend my course of life, I beat my breast in the ardour of contrition with pious energy.

I had no idea that any person observed me ; but an old citizen of Avila, who was counting his rosary at a little distance from me, received at length so much inspiration from my fervour that he determined to speak to me ; and, waiting at the portal of the church, joined company with me as I went out.

"Young man," said he, "you seem to be a stranger in this city ; and if I may venture to judge by appearances, you are not in a very happy situation."

At these words, which drew from me a deep sigh, I cast a look of sorrow on the old man, and, being unable to answer him, burst into a flood of tears. My affliction affected him deeply, and being anxious

to learn the cause of it, "My child," continued he, "you seem in great agitation: let me know the occasion of it; do not be afraid of confiding in me; I love the feelings which arise from a sense of virtue; you appear to be a good man, and I am interested for your happiness."

Revived by the tenderness of this address, which seemed to offer a resource to my misery, "Sir," replied I, "since, without knowing who I am, you so kindly interest yourself in my fate, a sense of gratitude forbids me to conceal anything from you; and when I shall have told you the story of my woes, you will, I am sure, acknowledge that I have reason to complain."

I accordingly began to relate to him the cause of my distress, by which he seemed much affected; and when I had finished my story, he embraced me with great warmth, saying, with tears in his eyes, that he was sensibly touched by the proof which Heaven had made of my virtue. This charitable old citizen, perceiving that I had no asylum but the poor-house, kindly carried me home with him, gave me new clothes, kept me as his inmate for eight days, and then, on finding I wished to reach Madrid, sent me to that city by the muleteers, with twenty pistoles in my pocket, and a letter of recommendation to a banker of his acquaintance named Lezcano. This seasonable succour, for which I did not fail to return my thanks to Providence, afforded me great consolation; and the sight of the metropolis obliterated all recollection of my late disaster with the Bohemians.

My first care, on arriving at Madrid, was to carry my recommendatory letter to the banker, who, after reading it with attention, showed me every civility,

and promised to promote my interest by every means in his power; but I was disappointed that he neither offered me a bed in his house, nor board at his table, which I acknowledge I expected. Happily, however, the generosity of his friend had enabled me to support for some time the expenses of the hotel; and I hoped in a short time to meet with some useful acquaintance.

A month nearly elapsed in visiting the several parts of this beautiful city, and in seeing all the curiosities it contains; but though I took great delight in these entertainments, particularly in frequenting the palaces, and in observing the different noblemen who attended the royal levee, I did not suffer my curiosity to prevent me from calling almost daily on Lezcano, that he might keep me in remembrance; and he always received me not only with great affability and politeness, but continued to assure me, that he would not neglect my interests. "Have patience a little longer," said he, "and I will place you in a situation, where you shall swim like a fish in the water." Time, however, passed rapidly away, and my stock of pistoles was very nearly exhausted; but instead of yielding to despair, I incessantly repeated these words of the Licentiate Salablanca, "Take no thought of the morrow." I had indeed received too many instances of the kindness of Providence to dread the future; and I experienced in a short time that Providence had not abandoned me.

The next visit I paid to the banker—"Vanillo," said he, "you could not have come more opportunely. I was going to send information to you that I have at length found a situation such as I promised you. To-morrow you will be admitted into the service of

Don Henry of Bologna, a perfect gentleman, middle-aged, extremely rich, and a knight of the order of St. James. He has, it is true, a tincture of the misanthrope in his character; but his sentiments are in general just, and his manners affable. The good sense and spirit you possess will suit his temper exactly. He seldom gives any entertainments, and only keeps one servant, to whom he gives a hundred crowns a year, and six rials a day for board wages. But, beside this, he is extremely generous. After a few years' servitude, he will reward your fidelity in a way which will make you very well contented with his liberality." I rendered suitable acknowledgments upon this occasion to Lezcano, who introduced me the ensuing morning to Don Henry.

The knight, who was about forty years of age, of an open countenance, and a person finely made, possessed a noble mansion, of which he only occupied one apartment, which was very elegantly furnished. On being introduced, he fixed his eyes upon me with great attention, saying to my conductor, "The appearance of this youth agrees extremely well with the character you gave me of him; but if it had not," added he, "I should not have hesitated to receive him implicitly upon your recommendation."

CHAPTER X.

VANILLO GAINS THE FRIENDSHIP OF DON HENRY, WHO SHOWS HIM A SECRET REGISTER WHICH HE KEPT IN HIS STUDY.

DON HENRY of Bologna, my fourth master, devoted the morning to study, and went at noon into the city to dinner, from whence he seldom returned until ten or eleven o'clock at night; so that my place was very nearly a sinecure; for, as the brushing of his clothes, and keeping his study in order, were my sole employments, and all he expected from me, I had of course the whole afternoon to myself, either to walk about, to make acquaintances, or divert myself in any other way. I took great care, however, to be at home in the evening before he returned; and, as he always found me ready to wait on him, he was extremely well satisfied with my conduct. His actions indeed were expressive of his content, for he condescended to converse with me in the most familiar way; and as I generally afforded him some entertainment by the recital which he obliged me to make of my observations during the course of the day, his familiarity improved by degrees into a cordial friendship.

Among the books which generally engaged his attention, I observed a large volume, the leaves of which he turned over and over every evening, and, after writing several lines and effacing others in it, before he retired to rest, locked it up until the same hour on the succeeding evening. Feeling a great





desire to know what this book contained, my curiosity became at last so eager, that I ventured to ask Don Henry what it was that he so regularly inspected, and affected to preserve with so much secrecy and care.

Far from being offended at the liberty of this inquiry, he smiled and replied, "I can easily excuse the curiosity you feel to learn the contents of that mysterious volume, and I have no objection to gratify it. It is a manuscript of my own writing," continued he, "which, for my own private satisfaction, I have for these last ten years taken the pains to compose."

Immediately opening the book-case, and reaching down the volume, he put it into my hands. "There, Vanillo," continued he, "in that volume you will discover the catalogue of all my friends; and, large as it is, it contains only their names and the times when our acquaintance commenced."

"O heavens!" exclaimed I, "is it possible, sir, that you have the happiness to possess such a number of friends? But what is this that I perceive?" added I, on opening the volume. "All these names are erased and obliterated. What is the meaning of this?"

"I will explain its meaning to you," replied my patron. "Your surprise is just. Know, then, that I inserted all those names at the times when I thought myself beloved by the persons to whom they belong, and effaced them the moment I found myself deceived."

"Is it credible," said I, "that you can have been deceived so frequently? The proofs you required of their attachment were probably too severe."

"Not at all," replied Don Henry. "All these false friends unmasked themselves in the course of our acquaintance. One, after having dazzled me by the

warmest professions of affection, convinced me soon afterwards that he only possessed the exterior appearances of friendship, and that inwardly his mind was incapable of feeling so refined a sentiment. Another I discovered sought my friendship only with a view to strengthen his interest in obtaining a promotion he was then soliciting: a third endeavoured to rival me in the affection of my mistress; and that man," said he, pointing to a name no longer legible, "used every effort, notwithstanding our intimacy, to seduce the virtue of my sister. In short, I no longer acknowledge among my friends all those whose names you observe are now defaced, and which I originally enrolled upon the credit of their perfidious demonstrations of friendship."

My eyes ran with eager curiosity over every page of this register, and observing that every name, except five or six on the last page, was entirely obliterated, I said to my master, "In truth, sir, the astonishment I felt at your having so many friends, is now increased by perceiving you have so few."

"In the course of a few days," replied he, "most likely there will not be one left: for those which still remain owe their distinction to the recency of our acquaintance, rather than to any proofs they have afforded me of their sincerity."

"What unpleasant reflections," said I, "take possession of my mind on this subject! I am tempted to think that the world is incapable of affording a true friend."

"No," replied Don Henry, "true friends certainly exist, but I am afraid they are rarely found; and there are thousands of men who fondly fancy they have a large number, when in fact they have not,

perhaps, one. I enrolled upon my register," continued he, "all my relations, considering them at least as my fixed and undoubted friends; but, you will perhaps scarcely credit the fact, I have been obliged to erase their names; for, of all my relations, my father alone continues his attachment, notwithstanding all the mortification my misconduct has given him."

Three or four days after this conversation, my master, on his return from the city, said to me, "Vanillo, bring me the register of friendship: I must erase two names from the record. I will dash from my remembrance an auditor of the council of Castile, and a knight of Alcantara; but before I proceed in this resolution, I wish to have your advice upon the subject. These two gentlemen were, the day before yesterday, in a mixed society, where a variety of calumnies were cast upon my character. The auditor silently listened to the slander, without attempting to contradict it, and the knight encouraged it by his applause—What is your opinion of such friends?"

"I think, sir," said I, "that the name of the auditor ought to be erased, and that of the knight blotted from the register."

"I am of the same opinion," said Don Henry; "and in expunging such names, I shall not be suspected of doing it from notions of friendship too delicate and refined."

"I have not the honour to know," said I, "the persons whose names still remain on the list; but I conjecture, that sooner or later they also will be expunged, since in a space of four or five hundred pages not one remains."

"You are mistaken," replied Don Henry, "you have not examined the pages with sufficient care; there are three names in the third page still uneffaced, and in all probability will ever be. The first is the name of an old gentleman whom I have known for a period of thirty years; I passed the days of study with him in my youth; the one has no secret which the other does not know; his interests are mine; and we feel a mutual anxiety for each other's happiness and concerns. I can command his purse as if the strings were mine, and he has an equal control over whatever I possess. In short, we are linked to each other by the closest ties of friendship, without the danger of diminishing its force by our daily intercourse. The second is the name of a German officer, who attended me to the field in an affair of honour, and who has more than once exposed his life to danger for my sake. The third is the name of a noble-minded man to whom I have long owed a large sum of money, without his having ever hinted at security, or requested repayment."

In looking at the names of these friends I perceived another that was not effaced; but my patron pointed out a mark at the bottom of it which was scarcely perceptible. "Permit me, sir," said I, "to inquire why this name is only half erased; there must be some secret reason for it. The friendship of this man was perhaps equivocal; and in the uncertainty you entertained of his real sentiments, you was doubtful whether he ought to be in or out of this register."

"No, no," replied Don Henry, "I am completely satisfied with respect to his character. He is an old Galician licentiate, who left his country at a very early

age to seek his fortune at Madrid. I knew him at a time when he scarcely knew how to subsist. We were then intimate friends, and the pleasantest moments of our lives were passed in each other's company. But of late years he has been an active agent to the crown, and is at present in great opulence. He avoids all those who knew him before his prosperity, and, in all probability, we shall never see each other again."

Deplorable effect of worldly wealth! Philosophers have well observed, that if we wish to preserve a friend, we ought constantly to pray to God that he may never become rich.

CHAPTER XI.

*VANILLO GOES INTO THE SERVICE OF ANOTHER MASTER;
AND BECOMES A PAGE TO THE DUKE OF OSSUNA.*

I FORESAW to a moral certainty that the few names which still remained in the register of friendship would be obliterated; an event which took place in less than a month. "The work is finished," said Don Henry, as he drew the pen across the last recorded name, "I will no longer continue this register. I only blot out one day what I had written the day before. It is like the toil of the Danaides."

"You are right, sir," said I, "and I should now advise you to make the same trial with respect to love, as you have made respecting friendship, and see whether you find your mistresses more faithful than your friends."

"O heavens!" exclaimed he, bursting into a fit of laughter, "I should profit greatly by the exchange. No, my friend, if you had had my experience of the sex, you would not have thought this proof necessary."

"Good," replied I, laughing in my turn, "you imagine then that I am entirely ignorant of the baseless foundation of female friendship: alas! young as I am, I know the sex but too well. The knowledge, it is true, cost me a few pistoles; but this is a science not to be acquired without expense."

Don Henry seemed astonished at my observa-

tions. "How, Vanillo," interrupted he, "you appear well informed for your years. Pray tell me by what means you gained this extraordinary knowledge of the sex." I accordingly related to him the history of my acquaintance with Bernardino, which afforded him infinite diversion. But soon after, assuming a serious countenance, he strongly admonished me to avoid with anxious care every tender attachment. "I have also," added he, "made sacrifices upon the altar of love, and I have been a greater victim than yourself; but I am now so much upon my guard, that I can gaze upon the most dangerous beauties with impunity; a proof that man need never become the slave of woman if he chooses to avoid it."

Don Henry, although he was now satisfied that the men on whom he had bestowed his friendship were incapable of returning it, continued to mix in their company with the same seeming pleasure as if they had been real friends; he dining occasionally with them, and they more frequently dining or supping with him.

Among those who most frequently visited him was a gentleman named Joseph Quivillo, a man of considerable merit in the service of the Duke of Ossuna: Quivillo seemed to take great pleasure in conversing with me, which I indulged the more willingly, as my master, far from finding it disagreeable to him, would frequently draw me into these discourses for the entertainment of the company.

One evening, among others, a number of little sallies escaped me, with which the guests were so well pleased, that they paid me the highest compliments. Each of them resounded my praise, but

particularly Quivillo, who at length observed that I should prove a very valuable present to the Duke of Ossuna. "That nobleman," continued he, "is fond of lively characters, and would be overjoyed to number among his pages a young man of Vanillo's merit." Don Henry, immediately addressing himself to Quivillo, said, "Whatever affection I may feel for Vanillo, I consent that you shall take him from me, on condition of his being numbered among the pages of the Duke."

"That being the case," replied Quivillo, "only let him meet me to-morrow morning at the Duke's house, and I will undertake the rest."

Although I felt a great pleasure at the prospect of being a page to so great a man, I was sufficiently politic not only to conceal my joy, but to affect so great an indifference upon the subject, that Don Henry asked me, if I had any objection to the proposed promotion. I coldly answered, that I had not, but that my attachment to him would not permit me to quit his service without regret. The guests universally applauded my answer, and gave me credit for my honest attachment; and my master, as well as his companions, was the dupe of my affectation. "Vanillo," said he, "I should feel that I abused the sincerity of your zeal, if I were to prevent you from entering into the service of the Duke of Ossuna, who, I am sure, will soon enable you to make a brilliant fortune."

"I am not yet in his service, sir," replied I; "who can tell? perhaps I may not have the happiness to please him;" and, in fact, this was the only danger of which I was apprehensive; for, notwithstanding my liveliness and sagacity, I doubted whether I

should be found of sufficient ability to fill the station they designed for me.

The ensuing morning I went, by the permission of Don Henry, to the mansion of the Duke, where I met Quivillo, who had been waiting for me with all the impatience of a man eager to communicate agreeable news. "Vanillo," said he, "you are upon the Duke's establishment. From the description I have given him of your character, he has appointed you one of his pages, and has authorised me to provide you the livery." Don Joseph accordingly conducted me to the major-domo, who immediately sent for the tailor to measure me, and in two days I was properly equipped to appear in the presence of my noble employer.

"My friend," said the Duke, on my entering the room, "do you think you will be able to discharge the duties of a page?"

"Why not, my lord?" replied I. "I have hitherto given satisfaction in the character of valet, and it does not seem to me that the one is a more difficult office than the other."

"You are right," replied he, smiling, and turning to Quivillo; "I have a good opinion of this youth," added he; "I do not think he will prove the most stupid page in this house."

Three or four Sicilian noblemen entering the room at this instant, and preventing further conversation with the Duke, I retired to join the number of my new companions.

CHAPTER XII.

*THE DUKE OF OSSUNA IS APPOINTED VICEROY OF SICILY;
HE DEPARTS FROM MADRID TO EMBARK AT THE PORT
OF BARCELONA, FROM WHENCE HE PROCEEDS TO GENOA,
AND FROM THENCE TO NAPLES.*

THE Duke of Ossuna had recently returned from Flanders, where he had rendered important services to the state. The King had appointed him gentleman of the chamber, and one of the four members of the council for Portugal. But these promotions were far from satisfying his ambition. He secretly sighed for the government of Sicily, which was on the point of becoming vacant by the return of the Duke of Thaurisano, the then governor, the time of his appointment being nearly expired.

There were two reasons which induced the Duke of Ossuna to aspire to this viceroyship; the one was, that the appointment gave him a great opportunity of carrying into execution his enterprises against the Turks, and the other was a certainty of succeeding to the government of Naples; and his solicitations upon this subject were at length successful; for the Duke of Uzeda, the favourite of Philip III., being his friend, he was appointed, in preference to all his rival candidates, to this important post, which he was certainly better calculated to fill than any other that could have been selected. The Duke, upon a remonstrance which he made to the Council of State, was enabled by an appropriation of a stated portion of the revenues of the island to keep a large

fleet continually equipped in the ports of Sicily, for the purpose of annoying the Turkish trade, and was entrusted with other very extensive powers for carrying his designs into execution.

Having received his commission, and made the proper preparations for his departure, he determined to proceed to Barcelona with Prince Philibert of Savoy, who had been lately appointed High-Admiral of Spain, and who had received orders to convey him to Sicily; but as the great numbers of which their respective suites were composed, could not have been accommodated on a road where there were but few inns, not very plentifully supplied with provisions, the party was divided, and while the Prince, the Duke and Duchess, Don Juan Telles, their son, and five-and-twenty domestics, proceeded by land to Barcelona, the rest of the train, with all the baggage, reached the neighbouring port of Alicant, and there embarked to join them. I was among the number that was not with the Duke.

Going out of the Gulf of Alicant, we were closely chased and attacked by a Barbary corsair, and I felt my portion of fear for our safety ; for the enemy was greatly superior to us in strength. Having made a vigorous resistance for more than a quarter of an hour, the corsair at last boarded us and put us in chains. To men who were proceeding in a sort of triumph to Barcelona, with the fairest prospects of acquiring immense riches in Sicily, such a capture was a severe misfortune ; it extinguished at once in my mind all the gay and flattering hopes I had for some time fondly indulged.

But as the corsairs were proceeding with their rich prize towards the coast of Barbary, insulting our dis-

tress, and deriding the weakness of our opposition, they were, in the latitude of Carthagena, in their turn captured by Don Antonio de Terracuso, who was conducting a squadron of six Spanish frigates from Cadiz to Barcelona for the purpose of conveying the Prince and Viceroy to Sicily. The victorious Terracuso carried us, together with two galliots filled with slaves and booty which he had taken with the pirates to the port of Barcelona, where, after continuing a few days, we re-embarked, and proceeded to Genoa, from whence Prince Philibert departed to Turin on a visit to his father, the Duke of Savoy, who was waiting there in expectation of his arrival.

During our stay at Genoa, the Genoese nobility, who possessed estates in the island of Sicily, paid the highest testimonies of respect to the Duke. He also received presents to a very considerable amount, not only from the senate, but from the merchants who traded to the island. The Count de Lemnos, Viceroy of Naples, also despatched two messengers to request that the Duke would take that city in his route, not only to enjoy for a few days its charming pleasures, but to afford him an opportunity of consulting personally on the common interests of the two kingdoms. The Duke, who really wished for this interview, immediately accepted the invitation. We accordingly put to sea soon afterwards, and coasting along the ecclesiastical shores of Italy, happily arrived in the port of Naples.

The Count de Lemnos gave the Duke and the Duchess, to whom he was related, a most magnificent reception. An apartment in the royal palace was prepared to receive them, and every day presented them with new entertainments: there was a con-

tinued succession of feasts, balls, and concerts during our residence at Naples. The nobility and gentry, seconding the inclination of the Viceroy, spared neither time nor expense to certify to the Duke the satisfaction his presence afforded them ; although they might have recollect ed the rigorous administration of Don Pedro Guion, the Duke's grandfather, who was formerly their Viceroy.

Engaged, however, as the Duke appeared to be in the pleasures which the Neapolitans afforded him, he did not forget to hold many private conferences with the Count, and to draw from him a fund of information which was extremely useful to him afterwards. At length we were obliged to bid adieu to Naples ; and the Sicilian navy being at that time employed in conducting the Duke de Thaurisano, who had embarked for Spain without waiting the arrival of his successor, we were conveyed to Palermo by a Neapolitan convoy.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DUKE OF OSSUNA ARRIVES IN SICILY—HIS ENTRY INTO PALERMO, AND THE FIRST PROCEEDINGS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.

THE Duke, on his arrival at Palermo, wishing to make his public entry with less pomp than diligence, continued only three days *incognito*; and the ensuing morning, entered the great seagate of the city mounted on a horse finely caparisoned and surrounded by the principal nobility and gentry. He was preceded and followed by pages and staff-officers, who dazzled the spectators by the brilliancy of their rich and superb liveries which had been provided at Genoa for this purpose. The Duchess followed in a magnificent coach, drawn by six horses, escorted by a body of guards, and followed by a string of carriages and horsemen which reached from one end of the city to the other. During the procession pieces of money were thrown among the populace, and nothing was seen for three days but public rejoicing.

At this period the most uncontrolled licentiousness reigned throughout Sicily. Every person followed the dictates of inclination alone, with no fear of punishment either from God or man. The magistrates, instead of punishing the guilty, so badly discharged their duties that every species of outrage was committed with impunity, and nothing was heard of but robbery and murder; which, according to the manners of the country, was generally effected by secret assassination.

The new Viceroy, to stop the farther progress of these disorders, and restore tranquillity to civil society, issued a proclamation, which was posted up at the corner of every street, importing, in substance, that his Catholic Majesty, informed of the violences which prevailed throughout the kingdom in contempt of all law, was anxious to restore peace and good government; that for this purpose he had suppressed the privilege of sanctuary to offenders who frequently availed themselves thereof, though they had been guilty of crimes that deserved death; that, in depriving the churches of this privilege, he had a right to expect that the Sicilian barons and other noblemen who had heretofore protected malefactors, would cease any longer to protect them, and especially refuse to conceal them in their houses or screen them from the rigour of the laws; and that his said Catholic Majesty had invested Don Pedro Guion, third Duke of Ossuna, second Marquis of Pennafiel, seventh Count of Urenna, Gentleman of the Chamber, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Viceroy and Captain-General of Sicily, with special powers to examine into and reform all matters, as well civil as criminal, and whether adjudged or not adjudged under the two former governments. I ought not to forget that by this edict it was also declared, that all persons who discovered to the Viceroy crimes committed in secret which could not be legally proved, although the authors of them were well known, might be assured that their discoveries should not be revealed, and that they should be amply rewarded either from the forfeited property of the convicts or the coffers of the king; but that, on the contrary, if any person neglected to discover any offence which he might know to have been com-

mitted, he should suffer the severest punishment; and that informers who made known the delinquency of magistrates, whether judges or governors of towns, should be doubly rewarded. The Duke also forbade all persons from carrying short daggers, stilettos, pocket pistols, or cutlasses ; and the proclamation concluded by exhorting all persons guilty of offences to surrender themselves prisoners within a certain time, and to merit, by an open confession, either an entire pardon or a partial remission of the punishment inflicted by the laws ; or otherwise they were to be proceeded against with the utmost rigour, and every means taken to apprehend their persons.

This proclamation produced great consternation in Palermo as well as in the other cities of the kingdom to which it was sent. All persons of wealth and virtue were well pleased with this spirited measure ; and criminals, together with the nobles who gave them protection, were the only persons afflicted. The Duke, who rightly judged that the guilty would not quit their retreats to surrender themselves into the hands of justice, adopted such prompt and vigorous measures to detect and draw them from their asylums that in less than three months every prison in the island was filled. Justly conceiving that very salutary effects might be derived by severe and rigorous examples, during his first year he tried and beheaded two noblemen for having concealed offenders ; hanged seven robbers, condemned twelve others to the galleys, and consigned a multitude of inferior offenders to other punishments. These executions, which were all performed at Palermo in one day, where no execution of any kind had been known for three or four years before, spread terror and con-

sternation among the other cities; and the virtuous part of the community, feeling their good effects, considered the Duke as an angel sent from heaven to restore happiness to Sicily.

The Viceroy, having given these proofs of his activity and courage, immediately departed from Palermo to make the circuit of the kingdom, and to try those offenders who had been arrested by his orders in the several provinces. He proceeded first to the infant city of Mont Real, and from thence to Cefalu, where, finding the castle totally defenceless and almost in ruins, he put the governor under an arrest; he also suspended the governor of Catania from his office; and, it appearing that they had neglected to apply to the preceding Viceroy for the necessary military stores, they were dismissed from their employments. The governor of Palli, however, experienced a very different treatment; for, in reward for the care and attention he had paid to the duties of his station, his salary was considerably augmented. The principal object of the Viceroy was to put the maritime towns into such a state of defence as might enable them to deter the Turks from making a descent on the island; and accordingly he ordered them all to be fortified.

Messina, where he ordered a great number of prisoners to be executed, was a place to which he gave great attention; and the Sicilians perceiving the industry with which he caused powder, ball, cannon, muskets, and every other warlike instrument to be manufactured, rightly conjectured that he had secret projects of great importance in contemplation. This conjecture was confirmed by his ordering a number of new frigates and galleys to be immediately

constructed; and it was concluded that he intended not only to render Sicily inaccessible to the Turks, but that he meant even to follow the enemy into their own ports and make them feel the terror of the arms of Philip the Third. The Duke finished his circuit at Syracuse, and after delivering the gaols of their malefactors, returned to Palermo, where he was received with joyful acclamations and every demonstration of grateful attachment. The peaceable inhabitants of Sicily had indeed great reason to be contented with his government, for in less than six months he had reduced the number of daring and dangerous offenders with which it abounded, restored the tribunals of justice to proper authority, and given tranquillity and happiness to the people.

The Duke, having thus arranged the internal policy of the state, turned all his thoughts to external operations against the Turks, who had infested the coasts, and, as opportunity occurred, carried away the inhabitants, after burning the adjacent villages, and committing other daring outrages. He accordingly ordered Don Ottavio, of Arragon, the commander of the Sicilian navy, to equip six frigates and two galleys, and proposed to the Grand Duke of Tuscany to join their forces. The Grand Duke replied, that he should send a squadron to sea at a certain time, with a view to attempt some enterprise against Carmania; that the Duke of Ossuna had only to take his measures accordingly, so that the joint forces might be ready at the same time to act in concert against the common enemy. The Duke, pleased with this reply, astonished a country which had long indolently borne the insults of the Turks, rather than take any measures to oppose them, by the

powerful armament he raised. The fleet, on board of which were many Sicilian noblemen, was just ready to sail under the command of Ottavio, when information arrived that the fleet of the Grand Duke had quitted Leghorn. Each of the squadrons, as if jealous of the honour of first finding and giving battle to the Turks, steered in different directions, and separately acted with equal courage. The Tuscan admiral laid siege to the castle of Agrimano, and took it by storm, notwithstanding the strength of its garrison, and, after collecting a considerable booty, set the place on fire. On the other side, Don Ottavio surprised twelve Turkish galleys, and many other vessels, in the port of Scio, and took them without resistance. The victorious admiral, on his return to Palermo, received, by order of the Viceroy, all imaginable honour, and the Turkish spoils were ostentatiously displayed to the eyes of the astonished Sicilians. The value of the capture was estimated at six hundred thousand crowns.

But the Sicilians were entertained with a spectacle still more gratifying than all the rest ; they beheld, on the disembarkation of the ships, seven hundred Christians who had been delivered from slavery, and nearly three thousand Mahometans bound in chains. The Viceroy divided the captured property into four parts ; one of which he sent to the court of Spain ; distributed another among five of the principal cities of Sicily ; gave a third to the officers, soldiers, and sailors of the squadron ; and the fourth, which was not the least, he kept himself. It is certain, however, that he employed a great part of the wealth he amassed in relieving the indigent and in other good actions, by which he procured great popularity and applause.

But here, my friendly reader, permit me to pause. I perceive that I am beginning to invade the province of the historian. It will be conceived, perhaps, that I intend to write all the transactions of Sicily during the government of Ossuna, whereas it is my sole intention to relate to you my own history. Leaving, therefore, the exploits of this hero to abler pens than mine, I will hereafter mention no circumstance of his government in which I was not myself concerned; for I ought not to forget, that it is by an account of my own adventures that I expect to entertain you.

CHAPTER XIV.

*THE USEFUL FRIEND WHICH VANILLO MET WITH, AND
THE FORTUITOUS CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH RENDERED
HIS SERVICES NECESSARY TO THE VICEROY.*

ALTHOUGH I had the honour to serve his Excellency in the character of a gentleman page, I was not thereby rendered more rich. This post, in the families of great men, is not so lucrative as that of steward, or maitre d'hotel. It is true, my brother pages and myself found excellent good cheer; we were extremely well kept; but we never touched a halfpenny. The money of which the Viceroy ordered charitable distributions to be made, did not pass through our hands, but was consigned to the care of higher orders in the household. A situation so unproductive frequently brought to my recollection my lucrative station at the deanery, and the provision I received from Don Henry at Bologna. A hundred crowns a year, and six rials a day, appeared to me so preferable to the high and barren honour of attending on a Viceroy, that I could not avoid complaining of my condition to Quivillo, who, more happily situated than I was, made his way in the world with great rapidity, since, from the character of gentleman to his Excellency, he had already been promoted to a lieutenancy in the Guards. "I have no doubt, Don Joseph," said I, "that you intended to afford me great advantages when you introduced me to the service of his Excellency, and I feel as much gratitude to you as if he had overwhelmed me with favours: but, between ourselves, is it not asto-

nishing, that since I have had the honour to be his page, he has not once favoured me by any particular attention, notwithstanding you apprised him of my talents, and the known friendship he entertains for persons of lively conversation ? ”

“ I am not less surprised at this circumstance than you are,” replied Quivillo, “ and have frequently thought of it even with vexation ; for you will easily imagine, that my mind cannot feel much content when you are dissatisfied. As I induced you to quit a comfortable and advantageous situation, I am bound to attend to your interests : and I assure you most solemnly, that my mind is much oftener employed in contriving your promotion than my own. As a proof of the truth of this assertion,” continued Quivillo, “ I have long meditated a scheme, the success of which I think infallible, and from which you will derive important advantage. Thomas, his Excellency’s old and confidential valet, is my most intimate, and, I believe, sincere friend ; for it was his interest which procured me my late appointment. You are not ignorant that this domestic is the man in whose bosom the Duke reposes all the secrets of his heart, and by whom he is, in short, almost entirely governed ; do not therefore omit any opportunity of gaining the good opinion of this man, whose friendship may be extremely useful to you ; he is capable of rendering you many services with the Duke ; his bare word will fix you firmly in the good opinion of his master, and afford you frequent opportunities of conversing with him. This scheme, which I have formed entirely for your benefit, shall soon be accomplished ; and I think that, in the course of eight days at farthest, I shall hear that you have obtained his affections.” In short, Don Joseph was so certain of

success, that he only required one more conversation with Thomas to effect his purpose.

This old and faithful servant, who was a man of approved merit, had not only been born in the Giron family, and successively served the two last Dukes of Ossuna, but had been the companion of the present Viceroy's infancy, whose confidence he had gained by accommodating himself to his particular humours and inclinations, with which, indeed, he was better acquainted than any other person existing.

This favoured domestic piqued himself on writing the Spanish language with peculiar elegance and correctness, and I made my court to him, through the medium of his ruling passion, with so much dexterity and address, that he began in a short time to exhibit towards me unequivocal symptoms of esteem and friendship. Authors in general cannot be so highly gratified as by hearing their productions applauded; but Thomas would, I think, like the Drusus of Horace, have willingly forgiven a debtor who had listened with the least complacency to his works. On the discovery of this innocent foible, so common to literary characters, I incessantly requested of him to read to me particular parts of his various works; for he had not only completed the history of one of the Duke's campaigns in Flanders, and a panegyric of his conduct while resident at the court of the Archduke, but was now composing a diary of the present Viceroy's transactions in Sicily; and, although his compositions were far from being bad, his readings were frequently so tedious, that I seldom found him a very entertaining author, and had frequently great difficulty in rendering my patience equal to his vanity. I always testified,

however, extreme pleasure at what he read, and even imitated the debtor of Drusus, by inclining my head in such a manner as made me seem the more anxious to hear. Delighted by the apparent constancy of my attention, he at length selected me for his confidential friend. "Vanillo," said he one day to me, "you must have observed that I have for some time entertained a favourable opinion of you; but I will now espouse your interests, and conduct the vessel of your fortune into a safe harbour. Confide the task of rendering you acceptable to his Excellency to my care, and be assured that I will seize the earliest opportunity to procure your advancement."

This declaration I carried with joyful haste to Don Joseph, who congratulated me on my success. "Thank Heaven!" exclaimed he, "your affairs now begin to wear a more favourable aspect. Your situation will no longer disquiet my mind. Thomas has everything in his own power, and you may now entertain the highest hopes of success." And Quivillo did not congratulate me without reason on the acquisition of this new friend, who soon afterwards convinced me that I had not done wrong in relying on his professions. Being attacked by a severe fit of the gout which confined him to his chamber, he sent for me, and said: "I promised, Vanillo, to embrace the first opportunity to do you service, and one at present offers itself which I will not permit to escape: I will inform you in what it consists. Listen attentively to my discourse upon this subject, for your interests are very materially involved in it. The Viceroy, our master, notwithstanding the seeming coldness of his disposition, is not an enemy to love; and although he affects to live in such a way as to prevent all suspicion of infidelity to the Duchess, he is rarely

without a favourite mistress. The Baroness of Conca who is only eighteen years of age, and is, without doubt, the most striking beauty in Sicily, is at present the object of his affections. Her husband, who is lately dead, and whose least defect was that of being fifty years of age, was so extremely jealous, violent, and capricious, that she was not only immured from all the comforts of society, but frequently treated by him like the lowest slave. She resides at present with her mother, at whose home the Duke frequently visits, in order to enjoy the pleasure of seeing her; but their interviews are conducted with such profound secrecy and address, that the Duchess does not even suspect she has a rival. I am the Duke's confidential companion in these nocturnal visits, which it would not be convenient to him to make alone; and, as it will be impossible for me to accompany him in my present situation, I have chosen you as my substitute on these occasions. His Excellency is informed of my intention upon the subject, and, upon my undertaking to answer for your secrecy, has consented that you shall supply my place until the return of health enables me again to discharge this important function."

Returning unfeigned thanks to my benefactor for the preference he had given me over so many other domestics, who would have been proud of the honour of so delicate an employment, I requested him to inform me of such particulars as might enable me the better to execute my task to the satisfaction of my illustrious employer; but he desired me to go first and present myself, in his name, to his Excellency, and inform him that I was ready and anxious to receive his commands, and then to return to him in order to receive particular instructions for my conduct in this important embassy.

CHAPTER XV.

*THE PARTICULAR CONVERSATION VANILLO HAD WITH
THE DUKE, AND WITH WHAT ADDRESS HE ACTED
THE PART WHICH THOMAS HAD ASSIGNED TO HIM.*

UNWILLING to lose a moment upon such an occasion, and conceiving that I should meet with no unfavourable reception, I went immediately to his Excellency's study, where he was alone, and, boldly opening the door, entered the room. Nor was I deceived in my conjectures upon this subject, for, the moment he perceived me, "Come forward, my friend Vanillo," said he, with a smiling countenance; "you are, I understand, the person whom Thomas has selected as his deputy; and his good opinion is not only a sufficient testimony of your merit, but clear and unequivocal evidence of the talents you possess; for I know that he is not easily deceived in his estimation of characters."

"I cannot flatter myself," replied I, "that he might not have made a better choice; but it will be some consolation to your Excellency to learn, that this useful servant will, in all probability, be in a situation to resume his functions in the course of a few days."

"Should he recover to-morrow, Vanillo," replied the Duke, "as he has once placed you in my confidence, you shall continue to possess it. Besides, the poor fellow begins to grow old and infirm, and is in want of a coadjutor."

"Permit me, my lord," said I, "to add another reason:—a nobleman, burthened as you are with the weighty cares of government, requires the assistance of at least two persons to lessen your fatigues."

The Viceroy, far from being offended with my freedom, replied, with great good humour, that he intended to find employment for both of us; and, in order to judge of my talents, asked me what masters I had served.

Orators are sometimes less brilliant in their speeches, in proportion as they feel an anxiety to excel; but in the narration which this question obliged me to make, I succeeded so happily, that I afforded my noble auditor complete satisfaction, by the ingenious representation I gave him of the several conditions in life through which I had passed.

"I am perfectly contented with you," said he; "you shall accompany me this evening. Go, return to Thomas, and tell him to have two friars' habits ready for the occasion."

Returning to the apartment of this favourite domestic, I gave him such an account of my conversation with the Duke, as convinced him that his Excellency was perfectly satisfied with his choice. "The business is done," said he. "His Excellency has discovered your abilities; your fortune is made; and I rejoice with you most heartily on the occasion; but it will now be necessary for me to instruct you more particularly in the task you have to perform. You will take care to be with me this evening, immediately after his Excellency has supped; he will be here soon afterwards, in order to disguise himself in the habit of

a friar; for this is the concealment under which he usually visits the Baroness. You must also disguise yourself in the same manner, in order to escape unobserved from the palace, and must be particularly careful to return before the break of day. These are all the instructions I have to give you. You perceive," continued he, with a smile, "that nothing more is expected from you upon this occasion than to act as the companion of a pious character."

I was not less punctual than the Duke in returning at the appointed time to the apartment of Thomas, where, without any ceremony, we each of us put on a friar's habit, and, being equipped in such a manner as to be easily mistaken for monks going their nightly circuit to confess the sick, we issued from the garden of the palace through a private door, of which my companion kept the key; and he soon convinced me that he was not unacquainted with the nearest way to the widow's house. The door was silently opened to us, without any light, and every circumstance of our reception was so cautious and concealed, that I might have fancied we were entering the mansion of a virgin, who, wishing to change her condition, had admitted her lover without the permission of the family. But the Baroness, although she was naturally a coquette, and extremely vain of the empire she had gained over the Viceroy's heart, was willing to conceal the intimacy from the public eye,—not, indeed, from any anxiety to preserve her reputation, but from a fear of incurring the vengeance of the Duchess.

Previous to our departure from the palace, Thomas

had given me a very high description of the beauty of this adored charmer; but I found the original far superior to the portrait he had drawn of it. My eyes never beheld a woman of such transcendent beauty; but I must confess, the richness of her attire, as well as the art with which she was decorated, conspired with the charms of nature to produce the pleasure I felt in admiring her. Brilliant, however, as both dress and beauty had rendered this earthly star, she was not the only object that attracted my attention; for Donna Blanche Sorra, her mother, although nearly thirty years of age, justly disputed with her daughter the palm of beauty, and divided my admiration. Blanche was the widow of a Commissioner of Royal Accounts, and lived with her daughter at Palermo, in great credit and respectability.

Conceiving it right to appear like a younger brother accompanying his holy father in some charitable visit, I remained quite silent while we continued in the company of these ladies. But while I was meditating how to play with propriety a single character in these nightly scenes, I had unexpectedly an opportunity of representing a double part. The lovely-looking Blanche, whose manners were infinitely more noble, and whose wit and vivacity were certainly not inferior to those of Signora Dalfa, while the Duke was engaged in close conversation with her charming daughter, desired me, under pretence of enjoying a conversation more uninterruptedly, to walk with her into another room, where, placing herself on a sofa, she desired me to sit by her side. Our conversation must have been highly ludicrous, if the

lady had not been better acquainted with the Spanish language than I was with the Italian ; for we should scarcely have understood each other's meaning ; but fortunately Blanche spoke the Castilian tongue tolerably well, and, commencing by expressions of sorrow that Thomas was so cruelly tormented with the gout, discovered as much seeming sensibility for his sufferings, as if she had been the cause of them ; then, suddenly changing both the tone of her voice and the subject of her conversation, and addressing me with a sprightly air—"My young friend," said she, "permit me to be your confidant : tell me how many conquests you have made at Palermo."

"Madam," replied I, with great appearance of modesty, "you surely wish to laugh at me. The ladies of Sicily have, I am sure, too refined a taste to bestow a look upon a person so undeserving of their attention."

"You should entertain a more favourable opinion of yourself," rejoined Blanche. "You enjoy the advantages of a good person, and your merit is discernible, notwithstanding your disguise. Besides, you are now of that happy age when men need only show themselves to attract the attention of the sex. Perhaps, unconscious of your power, you have already charmed the heart of some amiable Sicilian, whose bashful modesty restrains her from declaring her passion."

"Why, if I could suppose this to be the case," replied I, smiling, "I should humbly hope the lady would pardon me for treating with ingratitude a happiness I was ignorant of possessing."

"Oh, you will soon be made acquainted with it," replied Blanche ; "she will break through restraint,

inform you of your victory, and then it will remain with yourself to take advantage of it."

Blanche pronounced these words in such a soft tone of voice, as convinced me that my youth had made a strong impression on her mind, and that it only rested with me to perform the same part with the mother that my master was performing with her daughter. Inexperienced as I was, it was impossible to mistake her; and I felt an inclination to pursue the point, but my courage failed me; and the lady, not choosing to go further on the first interview, the conclusion of the scene was put off until another opportunity.

During this time, the delightful moments of love which his Excellency passed with his young widow rolled imperceptibly away, until the beams of Aurora began to twinkle on the distant horizon; when, recollecting this most important part of my duty, I instantly announced the danger of approaching day, and sounded a retreat. The two lovers soon afterwards separated, not without regret, although they might have been very well contented with the evening.

In bidding adieu to Blanche, I pressed one of her fair hands with transport to my lips, in order to repair the affront my timidity had given to her charms; and silently issuing from the mansion of these lovely widows, we reached the palace without being seen.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONVERSATION WHICH PASSED THE ENSUING MORNING BETWEEN VANILLO AND THOMAS—THE INGENIOUS SENTENCE WHICH WAS PASSED BY THE DUKE OF OSSUNA, AND THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH THAT SENTENCE PRODUCED UPON THE FUTURE FORTUNES OF VANILLO.

HAVING retired to the apartment of Thomas to unrobe, the Duke went immediately afterwards to his bedchamber to sleep; and I also, although I had not so much occasion for repose, sought mine with the same intention.

On the ensuing day, my first care was to visit my friend Thomas, who, on seeing me, discovered great impatience to learn what had passed during our interview with the ladies on the preceding evening, and I gave him, by his own desire, a circumstantial account of everything. Being indeed by nature very little given to reserve, feeling myself under too many obligations to him to conceal anything from his knowledge, and urged by his particular anxiety to be informed of the manner in which I was received by Blanche, I related to him not merely the conversation that had passed between us, but expatiated much more at large upon the subject than I should have done if I had been acquainted with the particular interest he had in it; and, not finding, in truth, matter sufficiently splendid to do honour to my merit, even added to my narrations several fanciful decorations.

I was then ignorant that Thomas was deeply enamoured with this lady. It will be easily conceived, that under such circumstances my new friend listened to my story with great displeasure. The strong terms, indeed, in which I described Blanche's tenderness towards me, acted like deadly blows upon the poor creature's heart; but I innocently attributed the grimaces and contortions he exhibited during the recital to the pangs of the gout, rather than to what in truth they were, the pangs of jealousy. To avoid discovery, however, he affected to feel the highest delight and satisfaction from those circumstances in my narrative by which he suffered in reality the keenest pain. "I congratulate you, Vanillo," said he, with a forced smile; "I give you joy on your having inspired the heart of so charming a woman with love. Blanche, though somewhat advanced in years, is still extremely amiable. I am delighted to find you please her. I exhort you to dismiss all timidity upon your next interview. Women in general are not inclined to condemn a lover for hastily seizing an occasion to be happy." But the jealous lover, while he was giving me this advice, well knew that he was able to prevent me from following it.

A few days afterwards I learned that he was my rival; and when the Duke next visited his lovely Baroness, Thomas, although his health was far from being restored, chose to be his Excellency's companion.

Perceiving the important mistake I had committed, my mind foreboded every possible ill consequence. "Miserable young man!" exclaimed I,

"what have you done ? What demon, the enemy of your prosperity, has thus, by one fatal error, sunk you to perdition ? Think not that even a friend can pardon the crime of being beloved by his mistress. You must no longer expect the friendship of Thomas, or fancy that he will continue your Mecænas. Generous sentiments may perhaps prevent him from injuring you, but they will never urge him to do you any service."

While I reproached myself in this manner for my youthful indiscretion, my rival, although he observed a profound silence respecting his recent interview with his adored Blanche, and never afterwards mentioned her name in my hearing, maintained, to all outward appearance, the same esteem and friendship for me as before ; for he not only always received me with great cordiality, but professed, as usual, the warmest friendship ; and even promised that I should, in his stead, occasionally accompany his Excellency in certain nocturnal expeditions, which he frequently made to learn the private sentiments of the inhabitants of Palermo respecting his administration of the government ; for the Baroness de Conca was not always the cause of his nocturnal sorties. This practice, which no Viceroy had ever before adopted, he performed by placing himself in the streets under various disguises, sometimes as a soldier, at other times as a sailor, at other times as a beggar, and entering into conversation with the populace, in which he provoked them by every means in his power to express their opinions, whether good or bad, of the manner in which he conducted the public affairs. Without inquiring whether this conduct be blame-

able or praiseworthy, it is sufficient for me to say, that one night when I accompanied the Duke, I should have gladly resigned the honour to my friend Thomas; for, having joined a cluster of the lowest order, who had assembled to entertain themselves, the Duke thought proper to censure a particular measure of his own which he had then recently enforced, in order to hear what they would say on the subject, when instantly two or three of them, who perhaps knew him, fell upon us both, and beat us about the head and stomach as if we had been two seditious brawlers against the state; and it was with the greatest difficulty that we made our escape. Of some of these adventures the Duke frequently formed many entertaining stories, but I never heard him mention this.

Indulged, however, as I was, in being permitted to accompany his Excellency on these secret and midnight expeditions, I was never permitted to accompany him to his mistress's house; an office which his confidant Thomas, whom jealousy seemed to have cured completely of the gout, always took special care to execute in his own person. Having, however, a much greater desire to preserve the friendship of the *valet-de-chambre* than to increase the good opinion of his mistress, the exclusion gave me no uneasiness; and attaching myself to him more than ever, I was so assiduous, that if I did not in fact efface from his memory all recollection of the confidence I had so foolishly reposed in him, I found him at least to feign forgetfulness of it so well, that he seemed to increase in affection for me day after day; and at length I fondly flattered myself, that, satisfied with having removed me from

all opportunity of seeing Blanche, he had nothing upon his mind against me.

While I was contemplating my security on this subject, a young citizen of Palermo accosted me one day in the street, saying, with a countenance of sorrow: "I entreat you, sir, to pardon the liberty I take in speaking to you; but, perceiving by your dress that you are one of the Viceroy's pages, I wish you to afford me, by a quarter of an hour's conversation, an opportunity of communicating to you a matter of great importance; if you can feel a disposition to render a service to a deserving man, you will do me the favour to follow me." Assuring him that he could not apply to a person more disposed than I was to afford pleasure to others, he conducted me to a house of rather an elegant structure, and introduced me into a chamber where lay a bed-ridden old man. "Sir," said the youth, as we entered the room, "there you behold an unfortunate father in a situation that deserves your compassion. Grief, which the treachery of a friend who has robbed him of ten thousand crowns has occasioned, is the cause of his malady. We are both of us entirely ruined, unless we can make interest with the Viceroy to interfere in our behalf."

"You know very well," replied I, "that his Excellency is easy of access; that he is humane, affable, and extremely patient in listening to any complaints. Nevertheless, although you have no necessity for any recommendation to him, I shall be happy to afford you every good office in my power. I am, perhaps, the most favoured of his pages. Tell me, therefore, the particulars of this

affair, and I will answer that his Excellency will do you complete justice."

The father and son thanked me for my kindness, and concluded their compliments by promising me a present of two hundred pistoles.

"Softly, gentlemen," said I, "and permit me first to inform you, that all the domestics of the Viceroy are forbidden to receive the smallest gratuity from persons they may serve, under the penalties of being not only severely punished, but immediately driven from the palace in disgrace."

"This is too rigorous a law," cried the old man. "How then shall I show my gratitude? for it is mortifying not to be able to acknowledge favours conferred, except by vain expressions of the sentiments they create."

"A Spanish benefactor expects no other reward," replied I haughtily. "Let us quit this unnecessary discourse, and relate to me the circumstances of the treachery which has caused your ruin."

The old man began accordingly in the following manner:

"My name is Giannetino. I am the son of a counsellor at law, who, after a laborious life, passed in the practice of his profession, died rather poor than rich; a circumstance which can only be attributed to the excessive disinterestedness and scrupulous integrity of his conduct. Subsequent to my father's decease, I had the good fortune to marry a widow with a jointure of a thousand crowns, and by this union was enabled to live at Palermo with elegance and ease. I have still the

reputation of being in good circumstances, but I shall soon be classed among the most miserable of its citizens; and, if I lose the suit which has been entered against me to-day, I shall be truly wretched indeed. The cause of it is as follows: About six months ago, Charles Azarini, Peter Scannati, and Jerom Avellino, three merchants, all of them my intimate friends, came to this house, accompanied by a public notary, and, bringing with them the sum of six thousand crowns in gold, informed me that they had agreed to make me the depositary of this money, which they intended to export whenever an advantageous opportunity happened. Delivering it into my possession, they desired me to give them an undertaking in writing, that I would not deliver it, or any part of it, to any one of them except in the presence of the other two; and I accordingly entered into this engagement by executing a document which the notary prepared for this purpose. We carefully preserved the money thus deposited for the parties concerned whenever its delivery should be required. But a few nights ago, Jerom Avellino knocked loudly at my door, and, on its being opened, hastily entered my room in great agitation. 'Signor Giannetino,' said he, 'if I break in upon the hours of repose, you must excuse the interruption from the importance of the business which occasions it. Azarini, Scannati, and myself have learnt that a Genoese vessel richly laden is just arrived at Messina, from which, if despatch be used, we have an opportunity of deriving great advantage, and have therefore resolved to employ the ten thousand crowns which are in your hands. Make haste, if you please, and deliver them

to me ; my horse is waiting at the door ; and I burn with impatience to reach Messina.'—'Signor Avellino,' said I, 'you seem to have forgot that I cannot part with them unless'— —'Oh ! no, no,' interrupted he, 'I very well recollect that it is expressed in the agreement, that you are not to deliver them unless the three parties be present ; but Azarini and Scannati are ill, and could not accompany me to your house ; they however absolve you from that condition, and desire that you will deliver me the money immediately : every moment is of consequence ; come, you have nothing to fear ; you have long known me ; I have always maintained the character of an honest man, and I hope you will not, by any unjust suspicion of my integrity, disturb the friendship which has subsisted between us, and be the cause of our losing the present advantageous opportunity. Do, do make haste,' continued he ; 'deliver me the money instantly, or I am fearful I shall be too late at Messina.' A secret apprehension of danger, which Heaven, no doubt, inspired for my safety, made me hesitate a long time ; but Avellino, the villain Avellino, supplicated, pressed, and tormented me in such a way, that my resistance at length failed, and I foolishly delivered to him the deposit ; with which he immediately disappeared."

The old man, as he uttered these words, recollecting his imprudence, burst into a flood of tears. My heart melted at his distress. "Do not afflict yourself," said I, endeavouring to console him ; "his Excellency the Viceroy has much in his power. Avellino will have great difficulty to escape his vengeance."

"Avellino, alas !" said the son of the old citizen, "is already at a great distance ; and, what is more

afflicting, no sooner were Azarini and Scannati informed of the trick their associate had played, than they instantly commenced a suit against my father for the money confided to his care. This cause will be heard in the course of two days, and my poor father, in all probability, will be condemned to restore ten thousand crowns to the complainants."

"The cause is not yet decided," exclaimed I; "and I have no doubt that the Viceroy, upon being informed of the facts and circumstances, which he shall be this very day, will choose to try this cause himself."

I made a faithful report of this case to his Excellency, who, after great attention, said to me, smiling, "I shall give such a judgment in this case as will make some noise in the world."

On the succeeding day he summoned the parties to appear before him; and when the plaintiffs had pleaded their cause, he addressed the defendant.

"Giannetino," said he, "what answer have you to make to this demand?"

"None, sir," replied Giannetino, elevating his shoulders and resting his chin upon his breast.

"He is right, gentlemen," replied the Duke, addressing himself to Azarini and Scannati; "he has no answer to make to your charge. He acknowledges all that you have said, and is ready to pay you the ten thousand crowns which were deposited in his hands; but as he cannot, by the terms of the agreement, deliver them unless the three parties be actually present, do you bring Avellino into court, and you shall have the money."

The numerous auditory which attended this trial no sooner heard the judgment, than the court resounded with peals of applause, and it became the subject of conversation everywhere throughout Italy.

Giannetino and his son, who thought their ruin certain, overjoyed to find themselves delivered from their embarrassment, gratefully invited me to dine with them. After dinner they spread upon the table the two hundred pistoles which they had promised to give me, and which I had refused to accept. What a sight was this to me! They pressed me to accept of them, protesting that no person whatever should know it. Human fortitude is extremely weak. They urged my acceptance of them in such various ways, and used so many arguments on the subject, that at length, finding it impossible to refuse, I reconciled all difficulties by putting the purse in which they were enclosed into my pocket. Recollecting, however, that the Duke was averse to the servants of his house making a traffic of their favours, I felt great uneasiness. But I trusted that this single instance of misconduct would never reach his ear, and I am persuaded that the two Giannetinos would never have divulged the secret, if his Excellency had not sent for the father three days afterwards, and asked him, in my hearing, whether he had not made me some present. The old man, incapable of falsehood, and unwilling to discover the truth for fear of doing me an injury, was exceedingly embarrassed by the question, while I felt the ground tremble under my feet.

"Conceal nothing from me," said the Duke, with a fierce and menacing aspect. "I command you, upon pain of my displeasure, to tell me what testimony of gratitude Vanillo has received from your hands."

The citizen, well knowing that the Viceroy was a man before whom it was dangerous to equivocate, acknowledged that he had given me two hundred pistoles, adding, by way of excuse for me, that they had been forced upon me by himself and his son.

"I do not blame you," replied the Duke, "for having offered him the money ; but, knowing my delicacy and express orders upon this subject, he should not have taken it. It is an offence which I cannot forgive."

Having expressed himself to this effect, he turned towards me, and inquired what I had done with the money.

"It is," replied I, "in my chamber, in the same state as when I received it."

"Well, then," said he, "fetch it here immediately."

I obeyed ; and when I returned with my purse, he delivered it to one of his gentlemen in waiting, saying, "Go and distribute these pistoles among the poor, for they alone ought to benefit by the indiscretion of Giannetino. But as for you, Vanillo," continued he, "you may retire whenever you please; you are no longer in my service ; and I forbid you for ever hereafter to enter the palace gates."

Throwing myself at the feet of my offended master, I endeavoured to excite his compassion. Useless servility ! He darted a look of furious anger on me, and walked away.

Drowned in tears, I ran to the apartment of Thomas, and related to him the circumstances of my disgrace ; and I must do him the justice to say, that he not only seemed afflicted by my misfortune, but promised me his endeavours to appease the anger of the Viceroy. Certain it is that no person could have interposed with greater probability of success, and perhaps I should have been restored to favour if he had made the attempt ; but, more jealous than generous, he felt a secret pleasure in my expulsion, and took good care that I should derive no advantage from his intercession, although he positively assured me that he had used every effort to procure my pardon.

"I represented to his Excellency," said he, "everything that suggested itself to me in your favour. I showed as much anxiety for you as if you had been my own son. In short, I neglected no means to re-establish you in his good opinion; but all my endeavours were fruitless; he is inexorable. He even told me that he had been too indulgent in ordering only a simple dismission from his service, for that your crime deserved a more rigorous chastisement. My dear Vanillo," added the perfidious Thomas, embracing me tenderly, "you cannot conceive the mortification I feel in not having been able to move his Excellency upon this occasion, notwithstanding the ascendancy which I possess over his mind."

And this artful old *valet-de-chambre*, the better to insinuate that he was speaking sincerely, and had always felt an affection for me, offered me a purse containing about twenty pistoles, which I took without hesitation, having lost every hope of being restored to my station under the Viceroy.

Previous to my departure from the palace, I went to bid adieu to Quivello, who was already acquainted with my disgrace. "My friend, Vanillo," said he at a distance, the moment he saw me, "I know all. His Excellency, whom I have just left, has himself related to me everything that has passed. I have endeavoured in vain to persuade him to forgive you. I could not even prevail upon him to revoke the sentence he has passed. I lament it most sincerely!"

We wept bitterly on taking leave of each other. But I must not forget that, to moderate my affliction, he gave me at the same time from his Excellency a mitigation of a hundred pistoles, with which I returned from the palace more than half reconciled to the adversity of my fate.

CHAPTER XVII.

*BY WHAT ACCIDENT AND WITH WHAT DESIGN VANILLO
BECAME AN APOTHECARY, AND THE HAPPY EFFECT
WHICH A QUID PRO QUO PRODUCED ON HIS FORTUNES.]*

ON leaving the palace of the Viceroy, the first person I met was the son of Giannetino. "I was coming," said he, "to request of you to seek an asylum in my father's house; justice requires that we should be sensible to the misfortunes of a man who has ruined himself by his endeavours to render us service."

Without waiting for a second invitation, I suffered the youth to conduct me to his father's house, where I was received by both the father and the son with every testimony of gratitude and esteem.

I had lived almost a fortnight with Giannetino, when the generous old man said to me, "My dear Gonzales, I consider you as my second son, and am anxious to procure you a permanent establishment in Palermo. There is in this city an old apothecary, who is not only my near relation, but, what is more important, my intimate friend; and I have conceived the idea of placing you under his care. Pharmacy is a science of which you will soon acquire a complete knowledge, and you may then marry his only daughter Violetta, who will make you an excellent wife. She is certainly not the most perfect beauty; but she is sufficiently pleasing, and has the reputation of being the most sensible girl in Palermo. Besides, she will, at the death of her father, possess a good fortune. Consider of this proposal," added he, "and if matri-

mony be not disagreeable to you, and you have no objection to the business of an apothecary, I will immediately make overtures to my friend in your favour."

Requesting Giannetino would allow me four and twenty hours to reflect upon this proposal, I carefully examined all its advantages and disadvantages in the best manner I was able. The idea of making juleps and decoctions sometimes disgusted me, but at others pharmacy appeared to me to be far preferable to surgery. "The reason of my dislike to surgery," said I, "was the necessity I was under of blunting all the feelings of the heart, in order to perform its cruel operations: but that is not the case with an apothecary; he is under no necessity of being cruel in making his salves and compounds." Having examined the subject in every point of view, I at length determined to accede to Giannetino's proposal. This generous Sicilian, the moment he received my answer, applied to the old apothecary, who made no objection to this scheme, and I was immediately received into his house.

My future father-in-law, whose name was Andrew Potoschi, was a man profoundly skilled in all the mysteries of his profession; an excellent chemist, and an accurate observer of the phenomena of nature; he had made many curious discoveries, and possessed secrets in the science of pharmacology, of extreme importance to the fair sex; particularly a cosmetic of his own invention, which restored a decayed skin to its pristine bloom; and a pomade which effectually dispelled the wrinkles of old age. As he intended to relinquish his business in my favour whenever I should espouse Violetta, he instructed me, with great dili-

gence, on all the mysteries of his art, and I soon learned to compound drugs and administer clysters with great art and dexterity.

Potoschi soon discovered that I should make in a short time a skilful pharmacopolist; and I must say that he spared no pains to teach me this profound art, nor did I neglect to profit by his scientific instructions.

I fancy, in this place, that I hear the jocose reader say, "Master Vanillo, you do not disclose the whole truth. The real cause of this zealous application to the business may, however, be easily discovered. Beauty was to be the reward, and it impelled you to industry."

I acknowledge it: the amiable Violetta appeared to me the richest prize that could be proposed to animate my labours in the study of pharmacy. She was between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age, elegant in her person, accomplished in her mind, and, what is very extraordinary in Sicily, where women in general are boldly coquettish, extremely modest and reserved in her manners. She had been educated, since the death of her mother, which happened about ten years before, under the eye of an old governess, who still superintended her conduct. But the terms on which I was introduced to the family afforded me the opportunity of conversing with her whenever I pleased. Our behaviour, however, to each other never exceeded the bounds of distant respect on my side, and modest timidity on hers; for, to speak the truth, I had too much diffidence to ask the question, and she had too much virtue to urge me to it.

The merit of Potoschi was so extensive, that he was more resorted to than any other apothecary in

Palermo. Patients sent for him from all parts ; but as it was impossible for him to attend personally on them all, he frequently sent me in his stead ; and I was considered in the families which I visited as his confidential assistant. One day, while Potoschi was absent, a woman came into the shop, and asked for the master of the house. "Madam," said I, "he is gone into the city ; but I am his representative, and you may safely intrust me with your commands."

"If that be the case," replied she, "my mistress the Baroness de Conca desires the Doctor will call upon her this evening."

"Very well," said I, "you may depend upon it that he will not fail."

Upon which the girl dropped a low courtesy, and without staying to gossip a single moment, Abigail as she was, left the shop.

The Doctor, who had been to leave certain powders at the house of an old judge, who was to be married in two days to a young lady of fifteen, returned home in a few minutes afterwards.

"Sir," said I, "the Baroness de Conca desires your attendance in the evening."

Potoschi smiled at these words in a way that seemed mysterious, and the terms upon which we lived together were so familiar, that I did not hesitate a moment to ask him the reason of his smiling so significantly when the name of the Baroness was mentioned.

"My dear son-in-law," said he, for this was my usual appellation, "although you was one of the Viceroy's pages, I perceive you are ignorant that the Baroness is his mistress. Take care," continued he, "not to reveal this secret. The secrecy of an apothecary, as well as that of a surgeon, ought to be proof

against every temptation ; but between ourselves, and for the sake of entertainment, there is no objection to disclose what we know."

To induce Potoschi to continue the conversation, I affected an entire ignorance on the subject, and my future father-in-law went on thus : "I have known the Baroness de Conca," said he, "from her earliest infancy, as well as Donna Blanche Sorba, her mother, and have attended them as their apothecary for many years. It was I who furnished them with medicines for the disorders of which their husbands died ; both of them rely upon me with implicit confidence ; and they have good reason, for I afford both of them very essential services. Blanche, who is by nature as black as a beetle, and covered with pimples, possesses by art the complexion of a cherub : thanks to the lotion and pomade which I shall teach you to make ! The labour of three hours at her toilet renders her person so different in its appearance, that she is completely metamorphosed. It is no wonder that Signor Thomas, the Duke of Ossuna's favourite, makes her his idol."

"It appears," said I, "that this lady is under great obligations to you, indeed."

"Her daughter," replied he, "is not under less. The Baroness, young as she is, labours under certain infirmities which oblige her to have a perpetual issue in one of her legs, and by my care it is kept so clean as to set the nicest sense of smelling completely at defiance. She also is equally beholden to both my lotion and my pomade. In short, if the Baroness has really charmed the Viceroy, she is more indebted to my art than to her own nature for her success."

The Doctor's discourse convinced me that my friend

Thomas's attachment was not very enviable; and while it reconciled me to the indiscretion I had been guilty of in disclosing my conversation, and extinguished in my bosom all desire of becoming his rival, it filled my mind with malignant joy. "If," said I, "I had concealed the particulars of our nocturnal conference, I might, by the delusion of vanity, have been at this moment desperately enamoured with a black face under a mask of ointment, instead of being, as at present, upon the verge of matrimony with the charming Violetta, whose beauty is not derived from her father's art."

That my deserts might enable me to gather this fairest flower in Palermo, I worked night and day in the shop, and surprised her father by the rapid progress I made in a profession, which in reality has nothing to do with magic, however the barbarous and diabolical names of the drugs and compounds may favour the idea.

I had already acquired the art of making every species of composition, when two prescriptions were sent in from Dr. Ariscador, a Navarrois physician, who at that time passed for a second Hippocrates in Palermo. There was not a baron, a count, or a marquis that would die contentedly by any other hand. These prescriptions were calculated to produce very opposite effects; for the one of them was intended for a counsellor, who had acquired a defluction of the lungs by elaborate pleading; and the other for a divine, who had contracted a violent pleurisy by running too precipitately after church preferment. Having carefully mixed the drugs and other articles, of which these respective medicines were ordered to be composed, I carried them to the

houses of the two patients; but by a most melancholy mistake, like a stupid fellow as I was, I accidentally delivered the potion which was intended for the advocate to the divine, and that which was intended for the divine to the advocate; and still more unfortunately, I did not recollect that I had made this egregious blunder, until the patients had drained their respective phials to the last drop.

Dexterous as I may be at concealing truth under a varnish of falsehood, I could not excuse this gross and dangerous act of carelessness even to myself; and being certain that both these unfortunate men must soon unavoidably be, if they were not already, numbered among the dead, I returned home in the most painful agitation, bitterly lamenting the misfortune of their prescriptions having fallen into my hands. An old and hackneyed practitioner would have continued calmly in the shop, without being the least embarrassed by the mistake he had made; but I had not yet had sufficient experience in pharmacy to indurate my heart.

I was so perturbed by this dreadful event, that Potoschi, observing my chagrin, asked me with great concern what was the matter; and urged by the compunction I felt, I candidly confessed the crime into which my negligence had betrayed me. Instead, however, of expressing sorrow or commiseration for this fatal disaster, he instantly burst into a fit of laughter, and told me that it was easy to be seen, by the excess of my affliction, that I was yet a mere novice in the profession. "It is ridiculous, my dear child," continued he, "to feel so sensibly the common accidents of trade. You must learn not to take such misfortunes as these so much to heart. Are man-

kind, and especially the members of our profession, infallible? Is it not a common saying, that such a one has blundered like an apothecary? a saying which presupposes that we frequently make mistakes. Believe me truly," added he, "I have made many worse mistakes in the course of my life; but I never thought it worth while to go to Rome to confess them."

"But tell me, Signor Potoschi," said I, "you who know all the properties of the drugs, tell me whether you think the two gentlemen I have caused to take them, be, in your opinion, alive or dead."

"I know nothing about that," replied Potoschi; "I am not so well acquainted with the properties of drugs as to be certain of the effects they may produce. But, at all events, do not permit your fears to betray your guilt; we can boldly assert that we precisely followed the direction of the physician in making up the prescriptions, and then, by concealing the change that has been made, if these patients should die, which I confess is extremely probable, Dr. Ariscador will bear the whole blame; which, indeed, is but common justice; for if they should miraculously live, he will, of course, have all the honour."

We resolved accordingly to place these two victims to the account of the physician, whose reputation, luckily for us, very much favoured our design.

The ensuing day, Dr. Ariscador came into the shop, with visible emotion, to announce, as we conceived, the sudden death of his unfortunate patients; but, on the contrary, he brought us the most agreeable news.

"My friends," cried he, "I cannot contain my joy,

or rather my transport ; the two last prescriptions I sent you ought to be consecrated in the temple of Æsculapius, as two grand specifics for the pleurisy and a defluction from the lungs. Can you credit what I tell you ? Both the lawyer and the divine had no sooner taken their medicines than they were almost instantly relieved. They slept profoundly the whole night, and found themselves, when they awoke this morning, perfectly recovered. Oh, unheard-of prodigy ! The fame of these marvellous cures already spreads like wildfire throughout the city. What honours shall I not gain in having so rapidly subdued two such mortal diseases ? My dear friends," continued he, "you ought also to rejoice in this new victory ; for you have contributed towards it by the fidelity with which you prepared the medicines ; and a portion of that glory which must shine with so much lustre upon me, will be reflected, in some degree, upon yourselves ! "

The Doctor was so overjoyed at the idea of his extraordinary success, that he could not discontinue his self-congratulations upon the occasion ; while we, who were in the secret, with difficulty refrained from laughing in his face ; but the profound veneration which apothecaries owe to the more exalted characters of physicians, saved us at the moment from the guilt of such irreverence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAGICAL ACCIDENT WHICH FOLLOWED THIS LUDICROUS ADVENTURE, AND THE EXTREME PERIL IN WHICH IT INVOLVED BOTH VANILLO AND POTOSCHI.

THIS event, however, was soon afterwards followed by another, which did not terminate so happily.

The Baroness de Conca, being suddenly seized with a violent fit of illness, sent as usual for the celebrated Potoschi, who, not being able to discover the nature of her complaint, called in Dr. Ariscador to her assistance. The physician, although he knew as little of the cause of her complaint as the apothecary, ventured to give a decided opinion of it, and prescribed accordingly certain medicines, which Potoschi carefully prepared with his own hands, and gave them to me to carry to the patient, whose appearance on entering her room filled my mind with apprehensions for her safety; but I hoped that the judgment of a young apothecary might be less infallible than the prognostics of an old physician.

The mother of the Baroness was kneeling at her bedside in great agitation, and was so far from having an opportunity to recollect me, that she never once turned her eyes from the object of her attention. I am sure, on my part, that if I had not known it was Blanche, I should never have discovered her through the slovenly negligence of dress in which she appeared. Abandoned entirely to the care which maternal tenderness required her to take of her daughter, she had,

if I may be allowed the expression, let her charms run fallow, and showed most clearly the want in which she stood of our pomade. Approaching the patient, I administered the medicine, and returned immediately home, where we soon received information that the patient having, almost immediately after the mixture was taken, fallen into a deep sleep, awaked in a short time in shrieks of direful agony, and at length expired in her mother's arms.

Both Potoschi and myself were much afflicted by this event; not indeed at the loss of the patient, but at the unpleasant consequences that might possibly result from it. The public voice is always ready to decry the profession, when a patient dies immediately upon the application of the medicine; and we were extremely apprehensive for our credit with the world. The first arrow, indeed, is always aimed at the physician, but it is seldom that the apothecary escapes unhurt. We should indeed have been happy if the loss of reputation had been all which threatened us upon this occasion; but the tide of our misfortunes ran to a higher mark; and on the ensuing day we were both arrested by order of the Viceroy, and conducted to separate prisons, where we were informed of the cause of our arrest.

The body of the Baroness, it seems, had been opened by order of the Viceroy, and it clearly appeared that poison had been the cause of her death. His Excellency, informed of this fact, and being anxious to discover the perpetrator of this horrid deed, had thought it proper to secure the persons who prepared and administered the potion. The following day we were both examined. However innocent a prisoner accused of so diabolical a crime may be, the testi-

mony of a clear conscience is scarcely sufficient entirely to quell the perturbations of his mind, and enable him to appear in the presence of his judge with tranquillity and indifference. Potoschi, when under examination, proved the truth of this observation; for, instead of attesting my innocence while he was justifying his own, he assured the court that he had made up the prescription with fidelity, but that he could not answer for my having carried the identical medicine to the patient. It is true, that on my examination I returned him the same compliment, by asseverating, in the most positive manner, that I had delivered the very same medicine he had prepared, but that I could not answer whether he had used the drugs which the physician had prescribed. Thus each of us endeavoured to seek safety by insinuating the other's guilt.

The Viceroy, who was very anxious to develop the mystery of this affair, being dissatisfied with our depositions, and conceiving that by taking an examination himself, he might, by the subtlety of his questions, draw from us the secret he wished to know, came to the prison, and ordered us to be brought before him. Having never seen me since the day of my exile from the palace, or even heard what was become of me, his astonishment, when I appeared before him in the council-chamber, is not to be expressed.

"How! is it you, Vanillo?" he exclaimed; "is it you, unhappy youth, who have deprived the Baroness of her life?"

He immediately ordered every person, even the apothecary himself, to retire from the room; and when we were alone, he continued his discourse to me

in these words :—" You know the reasons which induce me to avenge the death of this lady, and perhaps are acquainted with the concealed villain who has taken her life. Name him instantly, and a free pardon shall be your reward."

I calmly replied, " that if the Baroness had really been poisoned, she must have been poisoned before I administered the medicine ; that I had not devoted my time to the study of pharmacy for the purpose of poisoning people ; and that I was totally ignorant of the cause of her death."

" Since mercy will not induce you to reveal this secret," exclaimed the Viceroy, " we will try whether severity will not conquer your silence."

Alarmed by this threat, and as if I had been upon the point of receiving the torture, I threw myself at his knees. " Sire," cried I, in a flood of tears, " take pity on your unhappy page. Can you, who are the protector of innocence, condemn to cruel torments one who can give you no information ? If you were to cut me into pieces you would not be one step forwarder. Can I tell you what I do not know ? "

Happily for me I had a judge whose penetration was profound ; he saw that I was not guilty ; and the conversation he afterwards had with Potoschi convinced him, that although the medicine we prepared might have been the final cause of her death, we at least were not the poisoners ; but although he no longer threatened me with the torture, he gave no orders for my enlargement ; and I and the apothecary were continued in prison for the longer space of fifteen days, at the end of which we were set at liberty.

Resuming the business of the shop, our attention was principally occupied by the ladies who resorted

to this fountain of youth and beauty, among whom Blanche was not the least frequent ; for Potoschi continued to administer to her his lotion and pomade in great quantities.

This lady one day held a conversation with him which must not be silently passed over. "Signor Potoschi," said she, "you cannot conceive the mortification I feel for the sufferings you endured on account of my daughter's death. If the Viceroy had followed my advice, you would have avoided the ignominy of so odious and unfounded an accusation. The Baroness, it is true, was poisoned ; but what occasion had he to give himself so much trouble to discover the perpetrator of the crime ? He need only to have recollected the young Circassian, of whom he was once enamoured, and who died a violent death. Her murder was attributed to the jealousy of his wife, and he might have found at the same source the assassin of my daughter. The deed was perpetrated at the instigation of the Duchess, by means of a female domestic, who left my service three days afterwards. The Duke," continued Blanche, "is now so completely convinced of this fact, that he has dropped all further inquiry, lest he should learn more than he wishes to know." Certain it is, that all investigation into this affair sunk very suddenly to rest.

A man who is discharged from prison, although completely purged of the crime he was falsely accused of, cannot avoid thinking that the world squints at him with an awkward eye. At least I imagined people did so at me. The idea sunk so deeply into my mind, that I could not live in Palermo with any pleasure. To complete my disgust, it was only necessary for me to lose the affection of Violetta, for

whom I entertained a real regard; and in a short time I had good reason to be dissatisfied with her conduct.

A young officer of the Inquisition became my rival, and, happily for me, rendered his addresses agreeable to Violetta; I say happily for me, for if she had unfortunately given me the preference, my rival, in revenge, might easily have procured me a place in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition, where I might possibly have remained until this hour.

I showed upon this occasion that I was one of those pertinacious lovers who resolve to surmount every obstacle. The moment I discovered that Violetta was inclined to sacrifice me to her new gallant, I consigned her and all the drugs in her father's shop to the devil; and without bidding adieu to any person, I repaired to the port, where, finding a Genoese vessel ready to depart for Leghorn, I took my passage on board her, and quitted Palermo.

CHAPTER XIX.

VANILLO, ON HIS PASSAGE TO LEGHORN, GAINS THE FRIENDSHIP OF A YOUNG GENTLEMAN, WHO CONDUCTS HIM TO PISA—THE UNION IN WHICH THEY LIVED TOGETHER, AND THE CAUSE OF THEIR SEPARATION.

HAVING no particular reason for going to Leghorn rather than to any other place, but being unable, after the repeated mortifications I had received, to reside any longer at Palermo, my only object was a change of scene. During the voyage, I formed an acquaintance with a young gentleman from Pisa, whose name was Ferrairi, and who was then returning home from a visit he had been making to his relations at Montreal, but particularly to an aunt whose wealth he expected to inherit.

As the honorary page of a Viceroy might fairly put himself upon an equality with a private gentleman, I engaged in easy and familiar conversation with my new associate, who soon convinced me that he possessed an excellent understanding. Mutually pleased with each other's manners, a warm attachment immediately took place; and, to cement our rising friendship, we interchanged assurances of esteem and confidence, in which it was impossible that he could be more sincere on his part than I was on mine. Conscious, however, that gentlemen always despise persons of low and vulgar extraction, it was not without reason that I boldly assumed with Ferrairi the character of a man of family; for had I acquainted

him with my real condition, he would probably have disdained to converse with me ; but, taking me for the descendant of a noble stock, he yielded without the least restraint to the predilection he felt in my favour.

On our arrival at Leghorn, we found it impossible to quit each other's company. "We will not separate," said Ferrairi ; "you shall go with me to Pisa, where you shall continue as long as you please ;" and he repeated the invitation with such pressing importunity, that I found it impossible to refuse his request. We accordingly proceeded together towards Pisa, where he assured me I should find a comfortable residence, which he would render as agreeable as possible by the variety of pleasures he proposed to procure ; and, to do him justice, he took so much pains to render my visit pleasant and satisfactory, that I passed a month at his mansion with infinite delight. Fearful of trespassing any longer on his time, I announced my intention to depart ; but instead of suffering me to leave him, he reproached me with impatience to abandon a friend, who, he hoped I was convinced, entertained for me the most unfeigned affection. "Why should you quit me ?" said he. "You have frequently assured me that you are happy in my company ; I am equally so in yours ; and I possess a fortune sufficiently ample to maintain us both. Continue, therefore, your abode in this house ; and we will live together with fraternal fondness."

Penetrated by these affectionate expressions, I determined, from feelings of gratitude, to live entirely at his expense, since he so ardently requested it. I was even forced, for the sake of quiet, to suffer him to clothe me from head to feet at his own cost. In

short, to accommodate myself to his disposition, I had the complaisance to submit to all his inclinations. The acquisition of so firm a friend obliterated all recollection of my misfortunes from my mind; or rather, I considered, from the present situation of my affairs, my fortune made; although mature reflection might have convinced me that a friendship so warm and urgent is seldom of long duration.

While we were thus enjoying the pleasures of mutual friendship, Ferrairi became deeply enamoured with a young lady of high birth, great beauty, and exemplary virtue, who resided in the neighbourhood; and this passion proved in the end fatal to our friendship.

The lovely Engracia, for that was the name of the lady, had engaged his affections in so violent a degree, that all his former protestations, though most solemnly made, of continuing in a state of celibacy, vanished from his recollection; and, after paying his addresses to her for a short time, they were married. This change of situation, however, was so far from decreasing his attentions to me, even from the first moments of his marriage, that, on the contrary, his affection seemed to increase, and he requested his wife to entertain the same respect for me as for himself.

"Engracia," said he to her in my presence, "Gonzales is my particular friend; if I am dear to you, show him, by the kindest attention, that you are willing to adopt the same sentiments which I entertain in his favour."

Engracia, to please her husband, not only promised, but kept her word. She omitted no occasion of saying the handsomest things of me, and of giving me proofs of her civility and attention. But still there

appeared to be something in her manners that was not natural. Jealous of the confidence her husband reposed in me, she hated me secretly in her heart; and at length her aversion attained to such maturity, that she resolved, at all events, to drive me from Pisa.

The scheme she adopted to carry this resolution into effect is of too singular a kind to be omitted.

"Signor Gonzales," said she to me one day when we were alone, "it is necessary that I should confide to your good sense a secret in which you are materially interested, and on which depends the future happiness of my life. I feel a growing inclination to love you. It alarms me. I have endeavoured in vain to conquer my feelings. You fatally triumph over all the efforts which a sense of virtue and duty have induced me to make against them. It is from you alone that I can hope for safety. Fly instantly from a house, the tranquillity of which your presence destroys. I conjure you by the rights of hospitality, and still more by the obligations of that friendship which you owe to my husband, fly from me. The avowal I have made to you of my weakness commands you to quit Pisa immediately; for I am sure you have too much integrity to run any risk of dishonouring your friend.

Duped by this artifice, I really fancied that she was enamoured with my merit, and that, to prevent the consequences of this too tender passion, she felt it her duty to request me to retire. I should, however if the affection I felt for her husband had not been as sincere as it was ardent, most probably have followed the example of Paris; but, instead of running away with my charming hostess, I bid her an eternal adieu.

Escaping unperceived from the house the ensuing morning, I left her to fabricate such a story to Ferrairi, upon the subject of my departure, as she would think most proper.

But I have since been informed, that, in order to afford him some consolation, she told him that I had fallen in love with her—that I had declared to her my guilty passion; and that, upon her refusing to comply with my desires, and threatening to reveal the matter to her husband, I had decamped in the vexation of having made a fruitless attempt upon her virtue.

CHAPTER XX.

VANILLO MEETS, THREE MILES FROM PISA, WITH TWO GENOESE WHO WERE GOING TO FLORENCE—HE JOINS COMPANY WITH THEM, AND IS INDUCED BY CURIOSITY TO VISIT A CELEBRATED NECROMANCER.

DIRECTING my course towards Florence, mounted upon a scurvy pack-horse, and extremely contented with my person, when I reflected that women drove me from their presence to avoid the danger of loving me, I overtook, before I had proceeded three miles, two travellers much better mounted than I was, with whom I entered into conversation; and being informed that they were going to Florence, I requested permission to accompany them; to which they acceded with the usual expressions of politeness; and we became, accordingly, fellow-travellers on the road.

We took up our abode for the night at San Miniato, at an inn extremely well provided with every species of accommodation; and the landlord, who, having lived for some time at Parma with a German cardinal, was an excellent cook, providing us an excellent supper, we indulged ourselves in great gaiety and good-humour during the repast; for I was in fine spirits, and my companions, on their parts, convinced me that they were no enemies to mirth and pleasantry. They informed me that they were Genoese.

“I am a travelling jeweller,” said one of them, “and I have unfortunately a wife who gives me every reason to complain of her conduct.”

“I have the happiness to be a bachelor,” said the

other; "but my father, who is extremely old, extremely rich, and extremely avaricious, seems to have an objection to die; for he enjoys, notwithstanding his old age, such astonishing health, that when he leaves the world I shall have no other occasion for his money than to buy spectacles and crutches."

The landlord, who happened to be present during this conversation, addressed the Genoese. "If you are anxious, gentlemen, to know when the one will be released from *his wife*, and the other from *his father*, there is in the vicinity of this place a learned necromancer who will inform you."

On our bursting into a fit of laughter at this idea, the landlord assumed a very serious countenance, and gravely assured us that the magician he spoke of was a very profound cabalist; and he pledged himself to name more than twenty gentlemen who had consulted him and experienced the truth of his extraordinary predictions. "For example," said he: "only six months ago, an old merchant, who had a young wife whom he thought barren, consulted this able man whether he was doomed to die without children; the necromancer assured him that his wife would be brought to-bed within the year; and about eight days ago she actually produced him a son."

This story, the accomplishment of which was probably produced by some young friend to the old gentleman, afforded us great diversion. One of the Genoese, however, who was fond of the marvellous, and very desirous to converse with the cabalist, asked the landlord the place of his residence.

"Sir," replied the landlord, "he resides in a cave about two miles from this house, near the mountains, on the road to Castellina."

"Gentlemen," replied the Genoese, "although I have little faith in necromancy, I acknowledge I should feel some pleasure in visiting this magician."

"I have no objection," said the other, "suppose we gratify our inclinations."

"And I will bear you company," exclaimed I; "for I would not have you conceive that I have no curiosity to see so singular a personage."

We accordingly resolved to take a guide the ensuing morning to the cell of the magician; a resolution we did not fail to execute. After travelling for some time through many devious ways, we arrived at a high and broken rock, at the foot of which we discovered the mouth of a cavern, closely secured by an enormous door, against which we knocked loudly and demanded entrance; and having waited for some time in silent expectation, heard at length from within a sepulchral kind of voice exclaim, "Who is there?" On replying that we came to consult THE ORACLE, the door immediately flew open, and the first object that presented itself to our sight was the person of this famous necromancer. Figure to yourself a man at least six feet high, dressed in a white robe, upon which were painted in red colours all the signs of the zodiac. His head was covered with a large cap, turned up with the skin of a wolf, and peaked, by way of crest, with a tiger's head; a cluster of artificial snakes and vipers crawled around his shoulders instead of hair. In short, his whole dress was calculated to give him a very terrifying aspect.

The two Genoese addressed him, saying, that upon the fame he had acquired as a profound cabalist, they had come a long distance to consult him upon affairs of high importance to their happiness.

The necromancer replied that they were misinformed of his character. But the gentlemen, by means of entreaties mixed with encomiums upon the known extent of his capacity, forced him at length to confess that he was deeply versed in the occult science of cabalism. The Genoese, however, seemed to have gained very little advantage by this acknowledgment; for he told them that he never exercised his art to gratify curiosity, but only to serve those who had a real occasion for it. They accordingly protested, without the least hesitation, that they were not drawn to his abode for the sake of indulging any curiosity; and as this assurance precluded the magician from all further objection to exercise his art, he immediately began by insinuating the vast extent of his powers, and by showing them many rich jewels, which he said had been given to him by persons to whom he had communicated the events of futurity.

While my companions and the magician were entertaining themselves with each other, I examined, with critical attention, the inside of the cavern, which was crammed with objects that could scarcely be looked at without alarm. In one corner was a lion with fiery eyes and a tremendous mouth; in another, a furious tiger with distended claws, as if ready to tear his prey; in another, a winged dragon, eager to pounce upon its beholders. All these figures, though made of osiers covered with painted pasteboards, were so well executed, that even the live animals they represented could not have inspired greater terror. As it was impossible to look on them without trembling, they contributed to impose a belief on the mind, that the master of the cavern

was a great magician ; and confirmed my companions, whose wonder he had excited by a recital of many supernatural occurrences, in the truth of that opinion ; but I suspended my judgment upon this occasion, in order that I might profit by experience.

The necromancer, surprised at seeing me examine the surrounding objects with such cool attention, inquired of the Genoese why I seemed to avoid his conversation ; they replied, that I had no particular reason for it, but was only indulging the common curiosity of a Spaniard.

It was with great chagrin that the necromancer heard I was a Spaniard. "I do not like," said he, "to perform my operations before people of that nation ; they are for the greater part infidels and free-thinkers, who treat us as impostors."

"There is no rule without an exception," replied one of the Genoese ; "we will answer that this gentleman, real Spaniard as he is, is a great admirer of those superior beings who possess the art of forcing inferior agents to obey their commands. There is no despiser of your art here, we assure you ; and you may boldly proceed in his presence to perform your feats."

The magician, no longer hesitating to exhibit before me, called loudly on an agent, whose assistance was necessary to him. A figure, still more horrible than his own, immediately appeared in view. These two monsters obliged us to retire to an inner excavation more gloomy than the first, in the middle of which we observed a large globe of glass fixed upon a marble table. On approaching the table we observed all the letters of the alphabet painted in large characters on virgin parchment round the globe ; but what particularly attracted our attention

was a kind of dwarf figure all on fire within side, and which the magician told us was the subtle spirit he consulted. The eyes of this infernal agent, who held his right arm extended, resembled two burning coals.

The necromancer addressing his discourse to this figure in a solemn and elevated tone of voice: "Uriel, proud spirit," said he, "whom I have subdued by the power of my enchantments, I command you instantly to satisfy these gentlemen, and fulfil their desires. Are you disposed to obey me with alacrity, or must I employ the terrible incantation which you cannot resist?" Uriel remained silent. But the enchanter, who without doubt read the thoughts of the demon from the increasing fire of his eyes, said to the Genoese: "Gentlemen, your desires will be gratified; the proud spirit submits to the power of my conjuration. You have only to say one after another what you wish to know, and he will inform you."

"I have an old father, extremely rich, and extremely avaricious," said one of the Genoese, "and I am impatient to become his heir; therefore command your spirit to tell me how much longer my inclination will be disappointed."

"This question shall be instantly answered," replied the cabalist, who, immediately taking up a large glove into which he put his right hand, and passing it through the top of the globe, touched the figure, saying, "Come, quick, make haste." Uriel moved obedient to the touch, and pointed the finger of his extended arm to one of the letters. The magician immediately pulled off the glove to inscribe the letter upon a sheet of paper which lay on

the table, and again putting it on, retouched the dwarf, who with great docility turned about and pointed to another letter. The enchanter repeated this operation ten or twelve times, and then examining the letters written on the paper, assured the Genoese that his father had only three months to live: a discovery which afforded excessive joy to this affectionate son. The same ceremony was performed with respect to the question propounded by the other Genoese, who flattered himself that he should not leave the cavern with a prediction less favourable than that of his companion; and in effect he had the satisfaction to hear that his wife was at that moment at the point of death. But, unhappily for the gentlemen, the predictions which afforded them so much pleasure were the production of an imposture, which I discovered in the following manner.

The magician having succeeded in his operations rather by the credulity of the Genoese than the prescience of his dwarf, was silently enjoying, like a priest of Delphos, the pleasure of his deceit, when it came into my head, I knew not how or why, to take up the glove with which he had touched his spirit Uriel; and, on examination, I found at the end of the forefinger an extraordinary kind of substance. "What is this!" cried I; "is there not a loadstone in the end of this finger?"

The magician, who had not seen me take up the glove, appeared greatly troubled at this question, and turning with confusion and dismay to my companions, said, "Gentlemen, was it without reason that I suspected this Spaniard?"

"We will find out the truth of this matter," said

they; and accordingly, taking up the glove, they found a loadstone in one of the fingers. The sorrow they felt on being disappointed in the truth of their predictions, did not prevent them from bursting into a fit of laughter on this discovery; and the pretended cabalist, perceiving himself detected, changed his tone, and candidly acknowledged the deceit. The proud spirit Uriel we discovered was nothing more than an artificial figure formed of oziers, with an arm covered with a plate of steel, which being attracted by the loadstone in the glove, was made to point to any of the letters round the globe. But he supplicated us not to divulge the secret, saying, in order to induce us to comply with this request, that we ought to consider him in the light of a common juggler, or fortune-teller, who did no real injury to mankind; that although, in truth, he deceived the credulous, he only predicted to them the most agreeable events; that in general they were perfectly satisfied with his conduct; that, in short, his oracles were sometimes accomplished, which supported his reputation, and enabled him to live. Promising the impostor to keep the secret, we left him in his cavern, extremely mortified that he could not include us in the catalogue of his dupes; then taking the road to Empoli, we entertained ourselves with pleasant observations on the spirit Uriel, and the fools who rely on such prophets, and arrived the following day at Florence.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ARRIVAL OF VANILLO AT FLORENCE—THE EMPLOYMENT THAT WAS OFFERED TO HIM—AND THE SERVICE HE RENDERED DON CHRISTOVAL.

ON our arrival at Florence, we hired lodgings at a celebrated hotel in the vicinity of the royal palace. In a few days afterwards, my two companions left me to return home. We separated in the usual way, by mutual expressions of regret, and by mutually forgetting each other in ten minutes afterwards.

The hotel was in general frequented by men of fashion and consequence; but it was also occasionally visited by characters of a different description.

One day, just as the servants were bringing in the dinner, a person handsomely dressed entered the room, and took his seat at the table. During the repast, I observed that he frequently fixed his eyes very attentively upon me; and at length, on looking at him attentively in return, I recollect that he was one of the passengers who had sailed with me from Palermo to Leghorn. "I believe, sir," said he to me, when the cloth was drawn, "you and I have travelled together upon the seas." I told him that I recollect it well; and we entered by degrees into a long and intimate conversation. He informed me that his name was Roger Matadori, a native of the village of Aderno, in the valley of Demona, at the foot of Mount Gibel in Sicily; that he passed his time in the delights which Florence

afforded, with a few select friends of his own disposition; and that it would make him extremely happy if I would partake of the pleasures of their society. His manners were mild, and his countenance so engagingly open, that I thought I could not do better than to join his company. He accordingly introduced me to two young gentlemen of fashionable appearance, who received me with open arms, and invited me to all their parties of pleasure. They introduced me to some of the best houses in the city; induced me to visit the most beautiful women of their acquaintance; and drained me of my pistoles by a variety of expensive pleasures, without giving me the least reason to think they intended to empty my purse; for in all our parties each of us paid our equal shares; but they had resources, and I had none; and my mind became dejected in proportion as my funds decreased.

Matadori, having observed the depression of my spirits, said to me one day, "Signor Gonzales, you seem to be uneasy, and I think I can conjecture the cause of it; you begin to want money."

"You have guessed right," replied I; "and what is still worse, there is no quarter of the world from whence I can expect any."

"The means," said Matadori, "are in your own power whenever you please, without being reduced to the painful necessity of applying to friends for assistance. You have only to enter into the employment I follow, and I will undertake that you shall not only have a good appointment, but be enabled to live with ease and independence."

I requested that he would inform me of the nature of the employment.

"I was just going to tell you," said he. "You know that there resides in this city an old Catalonian, known by the name of Don Roderigo de Centella. This officer was formerly a leader of miquelets in Spain,* and he has also actually served in the troops of the Grand Duke with honour. The character of this man is very extraordinary; his mind is entirely occupied in causing justice to be administered in civil society. For this purpose he has a number of spies to inform him of the affronts and outrages that are committed in Florence; of these injuries he keeps an exact register; and undertakes to avenge them at a certain price. You will easily conceive," continued Matadori, "that a man cannot be engaged in this kind of pursuit openly, as it might be considered as a usurpation of the rights of government. Matters therefore are conducted with the greatest possible secrecy. The moment a spy discovers that any person has received an injury, he communicates it to Don Roderigo, who sends to the injured party, and offers, for a certain sum of money, to revenge his cause, either by the death of the aggressor, or by some other punishment proportioned to the enormity of the offence. If the proposal is acceded to, which is almost always the case, the captain pronounces the sentence, and executes it immediately by means of his spies, among whom he divides one-half of the money he received."

I interrupted Matadori hastily. "You are then, I conjecture," said I, "one of these secret executioners."

"You have conjectured rightly," replied he; "I am one of Don Roderigo's spies, and so are also the

* The miquelets were a sort of banditti who infested the mountains of the Pyrenees.

two young gentlemen to whom I have introduced you, the one of whom is a Sicilian, and the other a Venetian."

"The devil take it," said I, laughingly, "but you are recommending me to a service of some danger, which does not at all accord with my temper; and I am fearful that I should not acquit myself in it with great dexterity; for although I was bred to surgery, I am not of a sanguinary disposition; and besides, I must freely confess, that I do not think I possess sufficient courage for such perilous exploits."

"Oh! ignorant simpleton," exclaimed Matadori, "I possess no more courage than you do. Valour is a gift which Heaven has bestowed upon very few men. I declare to you, most confidently, that if the employment ever obliged me to attack a brave man, or any man fairly, or engage in any perilous undertaking, I would, lucrative as it is, renounce it to-morrow. Do not, therefore, deceive yourself," continued he, "by supposing that we run any risk. Where can be the danger? We rush upon a man who is not upon his guard, then strike him instantly to the heart with a poniard, or blow out his brains with a pistol, and our business is executed."

"I acknowledge the truth of what you say," said I; "but all your eloquence to excite a desire in my mind to augment the number of Don Roderigo's spies, will be fruitless. I do not like to raise money by these means; the very idea of assassination chills me with horror."

"I do not wonder at it," replied Matadori; "the prejudices of education unavoidably produce these sentiments; my mind like yours revolted at the

idea of shedding the blood of a fellow-creature, or rather I was fearful of its consequences; the captain appeared to me like an inhuman villain; but I saw the matter in a very different view, when I was informed of the admirable system he pursues in the condemnation of the offender. His method is this: he examines, by rules of the purest equity, all the circumstances of the case, and then consults a register, in which he has collected a description of every species of injury, pardonable and unpardonable, with the several reparations which ought to be made according to the nicest laws of honour. This is his system of jurisprudence; and by these unerring rules he decides, with as safe a conscience, and as much anxiety for justice, as any criminal judge in the country."

"Holy Heavens!" exclaimed I, to the Sicilian, "this impious and inhuman tribunal is worthy of Spaniards! They most fondly wish for vengeance. I no longer wonder that they are said to have expunged from their decalogue the sixth commandment. But, though a Spaniard myself, I am a faithful observer of it. I wish that I had also power as strictly to observe all the others."

"From what I have related to you," said Matadori, "you must perceive that whatever is repugnant to humanity in the system of this Catalonian captain, must be attributed to the strict principles of justice on which it is founded; for sentence of death is only affixed to the most atrocious injuries, as may be seen by the register, a copy of which each of his spies carries in his pocket as his breviary." In saying this, he pulled from his pocket a small manuscript volume written in the Castilian language, and

desired me to read a few pages, which among other things contained the following articles:

First. Let the traitor, who, after seducing a man into any difficult or dangerous enterprise, shall desert and leave him to extricate himself, be—STABBED.

. . Secondly. If a man of gallantry shall use any endeavour to debauch the wife of a jealous husband, he shall be—SHOT.

Thirdly. If a man return the favours which a friend has conferred upon him with ingratitude, he shall suffer the—STILETTO.

Fourthly. If any satirist, whether in verse or in prose, rashly censures the works of the illustrious dead, whose memories all the world revere, he shall be condemned to that punishment which the Romans called—*Fustuarium*.*

Fifthly. Every author who destroys the credit of any good citizen shall receive—TWO GASHES IN THE FACE.

The merit of the other articles which this curious code of jurisprudence contained, may be collected from those I have enumerated. I returned the volume to Matadori, saying, that I should prefer the duties of servitude to the performance of those which the office of spy to Don Roderigo required.

"You are to blame," replied Matadori, "for I now exercise these duties without feeling the least compunction, and the large profits they produce render my situation perfectly agreeable; this is the medium through which you ought to view the service; and if you were only to taste the sweets of two or three expeditions, you would find it a very agreeable and pleasant employment. We have frequently very

* Which was to be whipped to death with large rods.

valuable prizes. For instance, to-morrow night, we have one which will produce to each of us, by an agreement already made, thirty pistoles. There is at present in this city a young and noble Spaniard, who is enamoured with the wife of an old but opulent merchant; the young spark hovers every evening in the environs of his charmer's house; the husband has engaged to pay a thousand crowns for his punishment; one moiety of which he has paid in advance, and the remainder is to be paid the day after justice is executed on the offender."

"This Spanish nobleman," said I, "perhaps may not permit himself to be so easily assassinated as you seem to expect."

"Excuse me," said Matadori; "as he always walks alone, his mind occupied with love, and totally unapprehensive of danger, he will fall an easy victim. The attack," continued Matadori, "ought to have been made this evening; but Don Roderigo, following with scrupulous fidelity the principles of his system, thought it wrong to deprive a man of his life until he had acquired a perfect knowledge of his character. The only information he has yet obtained is, that he is by birth a Castilian, and that he is called Don Christoval. In vain I endeavoured to persuade the judge that this information was sufficient. 'No, no,' replied he; 'it is necessary first to know his family and connections, and I charge you to make the discovery this day, so that nothing may impede the stroke of justice to-morrow!'"

The name of Don Christoval alarmed me. I conceived that the person to whom it was applied might be my former master, who, visiting Florence,

was willing to enter into its gallantries ; and these fears were greatly augmented by the knowledge I possessed of his fondness for the sex.

The uneasiness which this uncertainty created in my mind, and the anxiety I felt, if he was really the man, to rescue him from the impending danger, induced me to feign an inclination to be employed by the captain as a spy. " You have only," said I to Matadori, " to show me the dwelling of this proscribed Spaniard, and be assured I will obtain a complete account of him before night."

Matadori, conceiving that I intended faithfully to assist him, was transported with joy ; and after praising my good sense, and showing me the dwelling of Don Christoval, quitted me to inform his companions that I was hereafter to share with them the profits of their judicial enterprises.

The impatience I felt to see this Castilian nobleman, whose days were drawing so rapidly to an end, is greater than language can express. The hotel at which he lodged was at a distant part of the city, and generally frequented by Spaniards ; and I immediately resorted to it, determined to apprise the person, whomsoever it might be, of the danger which threatened his life. I had no occasion to apply for information to the landlord, for the first person I saw, on entering the doors, was my dear master, Don Christoval de Gavaria. We re-collected each other at the same instant. Saluting him, and seizing one of his hands, I kissed it with such transport that I was unable to utter a word. On his part also, whether his former friendship for me revived, or whether he was moved by the joy I exhibited at seeing him, he was certainly affected to

a high degree ; and embracing me with the warmest cordiality, expressed his joy at seeing me again, in the strongest terms. "Yes, my honest friend," continued he, "I return my thanks to Heaven that we once more meet again, after a separation of so many years. I have been travelling, at the desire of my uncle, through Italy for the last fifteen months ; and, since I have the happiness to meet you here, I shall find it my inclination to stay much longer at Florence than I at first intended. But tell me, Vanillo, how do you pass your time in this city ? Is your situation comfortable ? What have you been doing since the day of our unhappy separation."

I gave Don Christoval an ample detail of all my adventures, omitting only my acquaintance with Matadori ; and when I had concluded my narration, he resumed his discourse.

"I am happy, Vanillo, to find you in a situation which enables you again to enter into my service : but as it would be painful to the feelings of a man who has been a Viceroy's page, to be reduced to the capacity of valet to a private gentleman, I will make you my secretary. Will that be agreeable to you ?"

"Extremely agreeable," replied I ; "there is only one circumstance that gives me pain. The old knight, who has so happy a talent at confounding the Latin poets, will perhaps think it as improper that I should be your secretary as your valet."

"The knight is no more," replied Don Christoval, "and there is no obstacle remaining to impede our reunion."

"Well, sir," replied I, "since it is your pleasure,

I am at your service. Place the same confidence in me as you did before, and be assured I shall always preserve my fidelity to you. Permit me to inquire what employment Love has afforded you since you have been at Florence; for I have no doubt but that some new Bernardino entertains you with kindness."

"It is true," replied he, "I am in pursuit of a merchant's wife, young, beautiful, and amorous; but although she has engrossed my attention for this last fortnight, I have not yet reaped any fruit from my industry. I must not, however, accuse her of ingratitude, for she has just sent me word, that her husband, who is an old silk merchant, is going to-morrow to Sienna, and will be absent three days; and I am to be introduced into the house at night by means of a menial servant whom I have engaged in my interest."

"Take good care, my dear master, what you do," exclaimed I; "instead of meeting with the pleasures of love, you will find perhaps a disastrous death."

These words, which I pronounced in a very serious manner, astonished Don Christoval.

"Vanillo," said he, "explain yourself. Why is it that you speak in this way? Is it from mere conjecture that you use this language, or is there in fact any danger of which I am ignorant?"

"Yes, sir," replied I, "you are in most imminent danger." At the same time I related to him all that Matadori had told me; and that upon hearing the name of Don Christoval, I had treacherously feigned to become one of the spies of Roderigo, for the purpose of protecting his life.

"You have conducted yourself in this business

with admirable dexterity," said my master, "and I deeply feel the great obligation I am under to you upon this occasion; but do not think," continued he, "that the designs of these miserable ruffians shall prevent me from keeping the appointment. There are three brave Spaniards who lodge in this hotel. I shall desire them to accompany me. They will, I am sure, be happy to assist in purging Florence of this nest of villains."

On my representing to Don Christoval that it would be much more wise and prudent to leave Florence at daybreak the ensuing morning, he replied, "My honour will not suffer it. It shall never be said that the fear of death prompted my flight."

"And must not you fly for fear," replied I, "if you should happen to kill Matadori and his companions?"

"Oh, my dear friend," said he, "the cases are very different; there is no shame in flying from justice when her arms are extended for your destruction."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS ADVENTURE—THE APPREHENSIONS VANILLO ENTERTAINED—AND HIS DEPARTURE FROM FLORENCE WITH DON CHRISTOVAL.

THE measures which Don Christoval proposed to adopt did not in any way meet with my approbation, and I again endeavoured to dissuade him from pursuing them; but all my efforts were vain. He immediately communicated his intentions to the three Spaniards, and they acceded to the scheme with as much alacrity as if they had been engaging in a party of pleasure.

While these gentlemen were enjoying in idea the success of their project, I returned to my hotel, where, pursuant to the measures I had preconcerted with Don Christoval, I informed Matadori that the cavalier, whose family he was so anxious to obtain some account of, was Don Christoval of Gavaria, a gentleman not only of high rank, but of immense fortune, in the province of Arragon, which was the place of his nativity.

"This is sufficient," said Matadori. "To-morrow we will give this gentleman a passport to the other world, and he will find that neither his nobility nor his fortune will impede his voyage."

On the evening of the ensuing day, each of the three spies, the better to enable them to strike this blow of summary justice, armed himself with a sword, a dagger, and a pistol, and concealed

themselves in the vicinity of the lady's house, who was the cause of these dreadful preparations, where they did not wait long before Don Christoval arrived; but, perceiving him surrounded by three men with drawn swords, instead of making the meditated attack, they conceived it more prudent to discharge their pistols at them and retire. They fired, however, with so much precipitation, that they only wasted their powder in the air. In vain did Don Gavaria and his friends follow the fugitives; they pursued men greatly their superiors in the race, especially Matadori, who possessed the talent of instantly placing a great distance between himself and his enemy.

The coast being now clear, Don Christoval was at full liberty to enter the house of the old merchant, and take complete revenge for the price which jealousy had set upon his life; but choosing rather to renounce his vengeance than to continue an amour which might still produce unpleasant consequences, he returned to the hotel with his three friends, and terminated an adventure which, if the spies of Don Roderigo had not been arrant poltroons, might have produced bloodshed and death. Poltroons, however, as they were, they made me tremble.

"Signor Vanillo," said Matadori to me the following day, "may I ask you what sum you received from Don Christoval for advising him to be upon his guard last night? for if you had not warned him of his danger, I am persuaded he would have come alone to the rendezvous."

I attempted to deny the fact; but Matadori silenced me, saying, "Deny it to others, my friend,

but do not attempt to impose upon me. Do not add the meanness of falsehood to the guilt of treason. There is not the least doubt existing in the minds either of my companions or myself, of your having rendered this kind office to Don Gavaria. You have played us a page's trick, and, as far as I am concerned, I freely forgive you; but I cannot answer for my Venetian and Sicilian confederates; and therefore, if you mean to act wisely, you will take good care of yourself."

The alarm which this insinuation of danger gave me, induced me to assume the appearance of undaunted courage. "If these gentlemen shall dare to attack me," said I, "I shall defend myself. If I am not naturally courageous, I am, to make amends, one of those rational bravoes who fight like madmen when they are obliged to do it."

"So much the better for you," replied he; "for if they should meet you accidentally in a convenient place, you will have occasion for all your bravery, of whatever kind it may be, to escape, in a whole skin, from their hands."

This discourse, which was only intended to terrify me, produced the desired effect; and, conceiving that I was not safe in sleeping at my own hotel, I not only decamped to take shelter with Don Christoval, but I constantly avoided walking alone either in the city or its environs; and, lest my rational courage might be put to the test, lived, as I may say, the life of a hare, for the course of eight days. I was, however, eased of my alarm by a letter which my master received from the Bishop of Salamanca, in which he desired his nephew to return instantly to Saragossa, to espouse the only daughter of the Count de Villa-

mediana, governor of that city, adding, that he intended to perform the ceremony himself.

Don Christoval, who paid implicit obedience to all his uncle's commands, immediately departed from Florence, accompanied by his secretary, a *valet-de-chambre*, and a lackey, for Leghorn, in order to wait the first opportunity of a passage to Spain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

*DON CHRISTOVAL AND HIS SUITE EMBARK AT LEGHORN,
AND SAIL TO BARCELONA, FROM WHENCE THEY PRO-
CEED TO SARAGOSSA—THE MARRIAGE OF DON CHRIS-
TOVAL, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS UNION.*

ON our arrival at Leghorn we were informed that a Spanish vessel would sail in the course of three days for Barcelona; and, taking advantage of this opportunity, we reached that port after a prosperous voyage, without experiencing the least bad weather, or, what is more miraculous in those seas, without meeting with a Barbary corsair. The moment we set our feet on shore, we hired mules to carry us to Saragossa.

Don Christoval, on our arrival at this celebrated metropolis of Arragon, not choosing to visit the Count de Villamediana, or to appear before a mistress whom he had never seen, until he had changed his dress, alighted at the first hotel; but, before we had been there an hour, a servant from the Bishop of Salamanca appeared. "Signor," said he to Don Christoval, "I have been seeking you from hotel to

hotel, by order of his Grace your uncle, who has been at Saragossa these eight days past. He is at the Governor's house, where an apartment is prepared for you; and they are waiting for your arrival with great impatience. I will return and inform them of your approach, which I am sure they will be rejoiced to hear."

The servant who communicated this information to Don Christoval was my old class-fellow at the University, the very Mansano whom I had left at the episcopal palace of Salamanca. He looked at me steadfastly for some time, and at length recollecting his former friend, exclaimed, "How! Vanillo Gonzales returned?"

"Yes, my good friend," replied I, "my kind stars have directed me to find my former master, who has kindly restored me to his service."

"I am overwhelmed with joy," replied Mansano, "and can assure you that the rest of his Grace's household will be equally pleased to find you reinstated in your former employ."

"My friend," said Don Christoval, turning to his uncle's valet, "perhaps you have seen the lady who is destined to be my bride. Does her beauty justify my eager haste to receive her hand?"

"Signor," replied Mansano, "Donna Anna will gain but little by the portrait I can draw of her. She is one of those brilliant beauties which it is impossible to describe; nature has spread around her such a dazzling lustre, that the eye is incapable of perceiving the least defect. You must behold her to have any idea of her charms. But I can truly say, that it was impossible for your uncle to make a better choice."

"Upon your representation," replied Don Christoval, with a smile of satisfaction, "I can have no doubt of my future happiness. I rely with confidence on your discernment. Go, Mansano," added he, "go, announce my arrival to your master, and assure him, that in a few minutes he will see his nephew."

Mansano returned accordingly to the Bishop, and Don Christoval made every preparation which he thought might prepossess the mind of Donna Anna in his favour. The style of his dress was neatly elegant, and when every decoration was performed, he repaired to the Governor's house.

The affectionate uncle burst into tears of joy at seeing him again, and, embracing him with great tenderness, exclaimed—

"My dear nephew, your return will afford me still higher delight if you approve of my negotiation for your felicity. The Count de Villamediana, my ancient friend, is willing, on my account, to prefer you to every other candidate for his daughter's hand. The alliance appeared to me so advantageous to you, that I have ventured, without consulting you, to promise your acquiescence; but do not conceive that I mean to tyrannise. You shall see Donna Anna immediately; if she meets with your inclination, you may become her husband in a short time; but, on the contrary, if you feel the least objection, I will myself oppose the match; and, on the other side also, if you should not meet with the lady's approbation, the engagements I have made are void. These are the terms upon which her father and I have agreed, in order to avoid the misery of uniting two persons who are not destined for each other."

"Sir," replied Don Christoval, "I am certainly under great obligations to you for the tender attachment you have always shown to my interest; but I doubt whether I ought to rejoice at these conditions, which, though extremely prudent, are not without danger. The heart of Donna Anna is perhaps pre-engaged; and if it be not I may be disagreeable to her, however pleasing she may appear to me."

"It is right to be modest," replied the Bishop, with a smile; "but, considering your age and person, I cannot but entertain some hopes. I may also say, to encourage you, that I cannot think your figure will be any way displeasing in the eyes of the young lady. But," continued he, "we will soon put it to the test. I must first introduce you to the Count de Villamediana, and we will then pay our respects to the Countess and her daughter."

The Bishop accordingly conducted his nephew to the apartment of the Governor. The old nobleman received Don Christoval with the most engaging politeness, and, struck with his fine and open countenance, involuntarily exclaimed that Donna Anna would be very difficult if she did not approve of such a lover. The Prelate, on his part, spoke highly in praise of the lady, politely saying he was sure the heart of his nephew must surrender at first sight. The Count and the Prelate, though satisfied of the truth of what they said, were, however, not without fear that some hidden caprice might confound their project. To decide the doubtful point they immediately conducted the young man to the cabinet of the Countess, where they discovered Anna in all the brilliancy of dress and beauty.

This first interview was employed in the inter-

changes of civility; not a word transpired on the subject of the intended alliance: for it was thought right first to discover whether the parties interested appeared to have any objection to the union. The first opportunity, therefore, which the Count had of speaking privately with his daughter, he asked her what she thought of Don Christoval, and whether she had any objection to him as a husband. She confessed, with modest candour, that she should, without murmuring, obey her father's order, to receive his hand.

Don Christoval, on his part, did not wait for his uncle's question, to declare the victory which Donna Anna had gained over his heart; for, in truth, she alone, from the first moment he saw her, occupied his mind.

"O Vanillo!" said he, "I have seen Donna Anna. Mansano has truly said that it is impossible to paint her, without doing injury to her charms. She has, perhaps, defects, but her lovely eyes beam with such transcendent lustre that they dazzle the beholder, and prevent him from examining her charms, except with admiration."

"My dear master," replied I, "deeply engaged as your heart appears to be by the beauties of your bride, I have no doubt but your merits have made an equal impression on her mind."

"I dare not flatter myself," said he, "with the hope of so much happiness."

"Fie, sir," replied I, "you cannot be serious in that sentiment; entertain a juster opinion of nature; if the heart of our sex palpitare with pleasure at the sight of female charms, why should you think their bosoms feel less emotion in our favour? I should,

in your situation, entertain a higher opinion of my merit, and immediately conceive that I had warmed the heart by which I felt my own so much inflamed."

Don Christoval did not remain long ignorant of the passion with which he had inspired his intended bride; and the Count, being informed by the Bishop of the tender impression which his daughter had made on Don Christoval's heart, ordered preparation to be made, without loss of time, for their nuptials, which were celebrated a few days afterwards with a magnificence suitable to the rank of the parties.

The event was accompanied by great rejoicings, and a ball was given on the occasion at the Castle, to which the principal nobility of Arragon were invited.

During the height of the festivity, a gentleman, masked and dressed in the French style, approached Don Christoval, and, clasping his hand, whispered softly in his ear, "Sir, I insist on your meeting me to-morrow morning at break of day, on the plain in the road to Gallego, there to receive the compliments I have to make you upon your marriage, which I cannot do but in privacy."

The spirited courage of Don Christoval replied, without hesitation, to the unknown, "Whoever you may be, be assured that I will meet you; and take care that I am not the first at the place appointed."

Don Christoval expressed these words with so much composure, that no person in the company suspected what had passed.

Towards the conclusion of the ball, which continued all night, he privately quitted the ball-room and, under pretence of enjoying the freshness of the

morning air on the borders of the Ebro, ordered a horse of great speed to be saddled, and soon reached the plains which lead to Gallego. The unknown adversary waited his approach at the entrance of the village. They perceived each other at the same instant, and were soon together at the appointed spot. Don Christoval addressed his adversary, who was still masked.

"Sir, before you offer me the threatened compliment on my marriage, inform me who you are, and why we thus meet."

"That is my intention," replied the unknown. "My name is Don Melchier de Rida. I am one of the disappointed lovers of Donna Anna, whom the Count her father has sacrificed to you. I am too jealous of your happiness to endure it; and since I have not been so fortunate as to obtain the object of my love, I will at least prevent any other from possessing her."

In speaking these words he alighted from his horse, which he tied to the bough of a tree. Don Christoval immediately followed his example. They drew their swords at the same instant, and a violent onset immediately ensued. Don Melehier, who was as adroit a swordsman as his antagonist, carried a thrust under his left breast, but happily the point of the sword only glanced the side. Don Christoval, to revenge this success, made a variety of thrusts equally artful and vigorous, but they were all parried with great dexterity and returned by other thrusts, which were avoided with equal adroitness. The combatants continued to fence with great fury for more than a quarter of an hour, and victory hung in equal scales. But at length Heaven, who was pleased to favour the

right cause, permitted my master to give his adversary the *coup de grace*, and he fell dead at his feet. The victor immediately remounted his horse, and returned to Saragossa, leaving the unfortunate gentleman who had provoked this appeal weltering in blood on the field of battle.

Don Christoval, on his return to the Castle, immediately communicated the particulars of this event to his uncle and his father-in-law, who, conscious that the family of the deceased possessed great interest at court, resolved that it would be necessary for my master immediately to conceal himself in some secret retreat until the matter could be accommodated; and, after much consideration, the Castle of Rodenas, belonging to the Bishop of Albarazin, an intimate friend of the Count's, was fixed upon as the properest place of refuge.

The day was occupied in making preparations for his departure, and in settling the means by which a mutual intercourse might be safely preserved; after which he retired to the apartment of his beloved wife, and passed two-thirds of the night in condoling with her on the separation which had thus early interrupted their hymeneal joys. A few moments before the approach of day he departed, accompanied by his *valet-de-chambre*, his lackey, and myself, mounted on four of the finest horses in the Governor's stables; and in three days we reached the village of Longares, from whence we continued our route in the same way to Daroca, where we passed the night.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DON CHRISTOVAL AND VANILLO ARRIVE AT THE CASTLE OF RODENAS—THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY WERE RECEIVED BY THE BISHOP OF ALBARAZIN.

AT daybreak the ensuing morning we continued our journey; and, by a beaten track between the mountains, arrived at Villa Franca, where, stopping to inquire the situation of the castle of Rodenas, we had the pleasure to find, not only that it was but a mile distant, but that the Bishop was there. Don Christoval accordingly despatched me with the letter which the Count de Villamediana had written to the Prelate, requesting him to afford an asylum to his new relation.

I repaired immediately to the castle, which was extremely magnificent in its structure, and the grounds by which it was surrounded in fine order.

The moment I announced my arrival from the Governor of Saragossa, I was conducted to his Grace's apartment, who, being a lover of music, was then enjoying a vocal and instrumental concert in the large hall. He rose and met me as I entered the room. I presented the Count's letter to him, which he opened, and, having perused its contents, desired me to follow him to his study.

"The Count de Villamediana," said he, "does me infinite honour to prefer this castle to all the other asylums which he might have commanded for his son. I feel with so much sensibility this new testimony of

his friendship, that I shall be anxious to do everything in my power to show my gratitude. Return directly to Saragossa," continued he, "and assure the Governor, that I await the arrival of Don Christoval with impatience."

"My Lord," replied I, "you will not long be deprived of the pleasure of his company; he is now not far off, for I have just left him at the hotel at Villa Franca."

"So much the better," replied the Prelate; "return to him with all possible expedition, and conduct him immediately to the castle, where you may assure him he will be received by a sincere friend of his worthy father-in-law."

I was not long in returning to my master, who, upon the report I made of the disposition of the Bishop of Albarazin to receive him, departed instantly from Villa Franca for the Castle of Rodenas.

The conduct of the Prelate corresponded with his promises: he received Don Christoval with every mark of politeness and respect; and, after a long conversation with him on the subject of the duel, regaled him with a supper and a concert. On the conclusion of the evening, he conducted him to the handsomest apartment in the castle, where he left him to repose.

To do justice to this hospitable Prelate, I must acknowledge that he was one who did the highest honour to Episcopacy. Descended from the House of Ozorio, he joined to the nobility of his family a fortune which enabled him to support a splendid table, the most superb equipages, and a regular band of music. Besides this, he was a man of bene-

volent and humane feelings, who gave all his superfluous wealth to the poor ; but, unfortunately for them, the style in which he lived seldom left much remaining for this purpose.

The ensuing day his Grace walked with his new guest round the gardens and pleasure-grounds, which were certainly worthy of admiration : on the one side, beautiful parterres, ornamented with a thousand curious flowers, interspersed with aromatic shrubs, offered incense to the sight and smell. Here fountains fed by the river Xiloa, which runs through the grounds, elevated the water proudly into the air, while its streams fell again with dashing noise into marble reservoirs beneath. There aviaries of wide extent presented to the eye the varied plumage of every rare and curious bird. These delightful gardens appeared, in short, to be the work of fairies ; for the Prelate, who cultivated them with equal taste and expense, passed much more of his time at the Castle of Rodenas, than at the Episcopal Palace of Albazarin, which was only about eighteen miles distant.

CHAPTER XXV.

VANILLO DEPARTS FROM THE CASTLE OF RODENAS AND RETURNS TO SARAGOSSA—HE LOSES HIS WAY, AND SLEEPS IN A HERMITAGE.

TWO days after our arrival at Rodenas, Don Christoval addressed me in the following terms: "We enjoy, you perceive, Vanillo, a most delightful retreat; and, what is still more pleasing to me, live under the auspices of a grandee who performs all the duties of hospitality with peculiar propriety. Of this circumstance we ought immediately to inform the Count de Villamediana; he will be delighted to hear of the respectful attention the Bishop pays to me; and I have resolved to despatch you to-morrow to give him the account."

I prepared accordingly to return to Saragossa, and set off the ensuing morning with a long letter to the Governor, and another still longer to Donna Anna. I also received one from the Prelate, expressing his gratitude to the Count for having sent him so amiable a guest as Don Christoval.

Passing through Villa Franca, I continued my road across the mountains, and arrived at the source of the river Guerva, where I lost my way by pursuing a path on the opposite side of this devious stream, instead of keeping close to its banks on the side of Daroca. After travelling several hours, I arrived at a kind of hermitage,

at the door of which stood an old man, whose venerable appearance inspired me with respect : a long brown robe enclosed his body, a simple network bonnet covered his head, a white beard flowed upon his breast, and the sacred rosary adorned his hand. "Holy father," said I, "do me the favour to inform me where I am, and whether there is any place of accommodation near."

"You are," replied he, "six miles from Belchite, and nine from Romana ; there is no place of accommodation until you arrive at the one or the other of these villages, neither of which you can possibly reach before night ; but if you will accept," added he, "the accommodation which my humble cell affords, I offer it to you with good will, and to-morrow morning you may pursue your journey."

Suspicion, says a Castilian author, is the parent of security ; I remained for several minutes uncertain how to determine.

The kind recluse divined the meaning of my hesitation, and smiling, said, "Young gentleman, do not permit my external appearance to alarm you ; this habit is sometimes worn by honest men." These words dispelled my fears ; and I dismounted from my mule, rendering thanks to Heaven for having so kindly provided for me this accommodating interview.

This venerable old man immediately conducted me into an inner court, where he called to an attendant, who was also clothed in the habit of a hermit, and ordered him to take care of my mule. We then entered into a hall, in which were a range

of benches to sit on, and on the walls pictures of St. Anthony, St. Pachomius, and other anchorites. Adjoining to this hall was a small chamber with two beds : " You see," said the hermit, " the only opportunity I have of affording comfortable repose to those whose misfortunes direct their steps to my cell." From the chamber we proceeded to a kind of chapel, in which this holy man generally offered up his prayers to Heaven. From the chapel he conducted me into a large garden, filled in great abundance with every species of fruit trees. " Observe these trees with attention," said he ; " they supply the place of butchers and bakers, and are the source of all my nourishment. My servant and myself live throughout the whole year on the fruits they produce, without feeling the want of other provisions. Sheep and other animals, which in the world are slaughtered to gratify the sensuality of men, we permit to feed in safety on their native plains ; and instead of treacherously entrapping the winged creation, we delight to see them in the full enjoyment of their natural liberty. As we eat only fruits, so our only beverage is water. Our cellar is in this garden ; it consists of a fountain, whose soft and transparent water excels incomparably the richest wines. You would acknowledge this truth if you had lived the life of an anchorit in this delightful retreat for only a few months."

The recluse, perceiving a smile on my countenance as he pronounced these words, told me that my taste was vitiated.

" Vitiated as my taste may be, my good father," replied I, " there are certain wines which I have tasted, both in Spain and Italy, which, notwithstanding

standing all your praises, I must confess appear to me more palatable than your water."

"Then," replied he, "I can only lament your situation; for I have nothing to offer you but fruits and water."

"Oh! do not lament it," replied I, "for I am fond of fruits; and as to water, one night will soon be passed." We walked round the garden, and returned into a small room, which served as a refectory, and on the walls of which were inscribed many moral sentences on the subject of temperance.

We then seated ourselves at a table, at which were placed two earthen plates, a large dish filled with various kinds of fruits, a pitcher of water, and two goblets; but we had neither tablecloth nor napkin.

The repast, of which I neither ate nor drank to excess, was seasoned with much serious and entertaining conversation on the necessity of despising the things of the world. Charmed by the mild eloquence which flowed with irresistible persuasion from the lips of this amiable and happy man, "My good father," said I, "it appears from what you have said, that you have played no unimportant part on the theatre of the world; and, if it were not taking too great a liberty, I would request of you to relate to me the series of adventures by which you were induced to seek this solitary retreat."

"My child," replied he, "I am willing to satisfy your curiosity, because I hope you will derive advantage from the recital you require."

He accordingly began as follows:—

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE HISTORY OF THE HERMIT.

I WAS born in the ancient and celebrated city of Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre, and boast a descent from the illustrious family of Peralta, with whom the kings of that country did not disdain to form alliance. Don Francis de Peralta, my father, no sooner saw me able to bear arms, than he sent me to serve in Italy, where I passed the early days of youth. I afterwards went into Flanders ; from whence, after a war of many years, I returned, on the restoration of peace, to my native country. Engaged in a life of pleasure, with young officers of my own age, hunting, gaming, plays, and gallantry, were my chief amusements ; but although I had an opportunity of conversing with all the celebrated beauties of the country, none of them touched my heart. I wantoned (if I may so express myself) for some time with impunity round the torch of love ; I at length, however, suffered severely by its flames. A grand tournament being proclaimed at Pampeluna to celebrate the nativity of a prince, most of the young officers entered the lists, to dispute with each other the fame of victory, and spectators resorted to the city in crowds, from Navarre, Castile, Biscay, and Arragon, to behold the contest. Among others, there came an old gentleman from Burgos, named Don Gaspard de

Henis, accompanied by Donna Innes his daughter. The aunt of this young lady, Donna Juanna Ximenes, a rich widow, who supported a splendid establishment in Pampeluna, and with whom these visitors resided, was at this period upon terms of particular intimacy with a sister I then had, named Leonora ; and as they seldom failed to visit each other every day, Leonora immediately became acquainted with Donna Innes, and a confidential friendship was cemented betwixt them.

Charmed by the graces of her new friend, Leonora was incessantly resounding the praises of the lovely Castilian, for so she always called the daughter of Don Gaspard. " My dear brother," said she, " is not Donna Innes an amiable girl ? The beauties of her person are only equalled by the excellences of her mind. She is all accomplished ! How happy will be the youth who becomes her husband."

This language, which Leonora frequently repeated with increasing enthusiasm, was so far from making any impression on my mind, or even exciting any violent desire to see a lady who was so extolled by her own sex, that I ridiculed the praises she so liberally bestowed, and told her that in all probability this object, much as she admired her, possessed a greater number of bad than good qualities. In short, the more I heard in favour of the lovely Castilian, the less desire I had to see her.

Whilst I enjoyed the pleasures of this happy indifference, although I was acquainted with many of the sex well qualified to deprive me of it, the day appointed for the tournament arrived—a day more unfortunate to me than any other of my life,

and which I cannot now recollect, without a remembrance of the misfortunes that followed it.

On entering the lists with my lance couched, waiting for the signal of combat, I cast my eyes towards a balcony, and perceived my sister in deep conversation with a young lady, whose appearance instantly caught my attention, and, by a certain charm, which I cannot well explain, filled me with emotion and delight. "It must be Donna Innes," said I to myself. The perturbation of my heart at that instant convinced me it was the lovely Castilian, and I felt that Love was now determined to revenge the inattention I had paid to the language in which Leonora had expressed her praise.

A desire to attract, by some signal exploit, the observation of a lady who had thus touched my soul, called forth all my efforts, and enabled me to gain the highest honours of the day. My sister, whose heart beat in unison with my own at the acclamations of applause which the spectators bestowed on me, was careful to heighten the admiration of her fair companion, by informing her who I was. The lovely Castilian, in politeness to her friend, appeared to partake of her joy, and congratulated her on having such a brother.

The tournament being finished, I sought the earliest opportunity to inquire of Leonora the name of her companion. "It is Donna Innes," replied she. "Well, Don Felix, what do you say, now you have seen her? For, short as the time was which you had to contemplate her person, you must have been struck with its beauty."

"I confess," replied I, "the radiance of her charms

has dazzled me, or rather made me feel the whole force of their power. Alas! while I was applauded in the lists as a conqueror, I was conquered."

"My dear brother," replied Leonora, "I am not surprised that Donna Innes has inspired your heart with love; and the friendship which unites Donna Innes's heart to Leonora's encourages my hope of being able to serve you." I profited so much by these tender offers of assistance, that my sister undertook to convey a letter to the lovely Castilian, in which I declared my passion in the warmest terms.

I concluded, from the reliance which I placed upon the ability of my mediatress, and the good opinion which a young man naturally indulges of his own merit, that my billet would be favourably received; and my expectation was not disappointed.

"Don Felix," said my sister to me, a few days after, "I have joyful tidings to announce to you: the lady refused, for some time, to open your letter; but I spoke so warmly in your favour, that at length she not only complied, but, expressing a high esteem for your merits, consented that you shall solicit her in marriage of her father when he returns from Biscay, where he is at present gone on business which may detain him two or three months. In the meantime, she has no objection to receive your addresses, provided they can be managed with secrecy; the care of her reputation obliging her, as she observes, to conduct herself cautiously during his absence: she therefore prohibits you from serenading her with the sound of flutes, guitars, and, in one word, from every species

of clamorous gallantry. This prohibition is, I acknowledge, extremely mortifying to a Spanish lover; but, in lieu of these pleasures, you are permitted to write to her, and may flatter yourself with the hope of receiving answers."

The transports of joy with which this conversation inspired me, convinced Leonora of the violence of my passion; and her affection for me was such, that I think the idea she entertained of my approaching felicity rendered her joy equal to my own. The good offices of a sister, to whom my interests were so dear, was of infinite advantage. I enjoyed with the lovely Castilian, during a period of two months, not only a literary correspondence, but, by means of a grated window which looked into a solitary court at the back of her aunt's house, was frequently admitted to a nocturnal interview. Everything succeeded according to my wishes, and I entertained the highest hopes of happiness; but while love brightened my days, my evil genius was laying snares to make me miserable.

Don Gaspard, on his return from Biscay, intimated his intention of returning with his daughter to Burgos; and while I felt on this occasion all the alarm of a lover fearful of losing the object of his affections, Donna Innes appeared equally afflicted by this omen of separation. Happily, however, for me, Donna Juanna, who adored her niece, would not consent to her departure; and her father, not daring to displease a relation whose wealth he expected his children would inherit, at length consented to leave her behind. But no sooner were my apprehensions upon this occasion quieted, than a new danger of a similar kind occurred.

One day, while Leonora, with a number of other ladies, were visiting Donna Juanna, a messenger arrived and delivered a letter to Donna Innes, who retired to the alcove and opened it. My sister, whose eyes were attentively fixed upon her while she was reading the letter, observed in her countenance uncommon marks of joy, and that every word it contained affected her with pleasure; she also observed, that when Donna Innes had read the letter, she called her servant, and whispered something softly in her ear, and that the servant, in a tone of voice sufficiently loud to be overheard, advised her to follow her inclination.

On these circumstances being mentioned to me by my sister, we endeavoured to divine the possible meaning of these significant gestures and expressions, and after a variety of conjectures, by no means favourable to my happiness, we concluded that the letter came from a rival, whose addresses she was inclined to encourage. We accordingly resolved upon certain measures to discover who the person was that had thus presumptuously dared to dispute with me this lovely prize.

Applying to Theodora, the confidential servant of my charmer, we drew from her, by means of presents, a candid confession that her mistress was beloved by Don Martin de Trevigno, one of the richest gentlemen of Biscay, and that they frequently corresponded with each other. "And to convince you of the truth of what I say," continued the *faithful* girl, "I will show you her answer to the very letter she has just received from your rival; for all her despatches pass through my hands in their way to the messenger."

Theodora instantly performed her promise; and the following is a copy of the letter which Donna Innes had written to her Biscayan lover:—

"I rejoice to find that you have obtained the title of Knight of the Order of St. James, which you so ardently desired, and which has so long deprived me of the pleasure of seeing the only object of my tender affection. Doubt not that I shall be highly pleased with the speedy return with which you flatter me; but remember that I forbid you to visit Pampeluna. I have particular reasons for this prohibition. Go to Burgos, and exert your utmost endeavours to persuade my father to send for me home, in defiance of my aunt's reluctance to part with me. I confess she makes me purchase my expectation of becoming her heiress at a high price. Adieu! and may I find, on my return, your affection equal to the tenderness and fidelity of

"D. INNES."

My sensations on reading a letter which so explicitly informed me of the perfidy of Donna Innes no language can express. I had great occasion for the wise counsel of my amiable sister to prevent the total distraction of my mind; and her prudent advice brought me so completely to my senses, that instead of abandoning myself to my fury, and overwhelming the coquette with vain reproaches, I determined to dissemble. Leonora also followed my example with so much adroitness, that Donna Innes, not suspecting we were acquainted with her perfidy, continued as usual her seeming confidence, each of us striving who should best conceal their real sentiments. I even prevailed on myself to continue my correspondence with this faithless fair

one in the warmest language of love, and she continued to answer my letters in even warmer expressions than my own.

While we were living thus cordially with each other, Don Gaspard arrived at Pampeluna, to reconduct his daughter to Burgos, to which place Don Martin had then returned. But Donna Juanna still opposed; and notwithstanding all the reasons which her brother offered to her, absolutely refused to consent to the departure of her niece. Don Gaspard, not daring to thwart the inclination of a sister who was likely to take revenge in her last will, not only quitted the contest, but consented to relinquish his residence at Burgos and to live entirely with his sister at Pampeluna. The perfidious niece would willingly have sacrificed the tender attachment of her aunt to her own tender attachment for her lover, who she foresaw would soon repair to Pampeluna, and render by his presence the further continuance of her double professions impracticable. Her mind, fruitful as it was in stratagems of deceit, was unequal to the difficulties of her situation, and she discovered a perturbation and anxiety, which nothing but a knowledge of my being acquainted with the secret of her guilt could possibly increase.

The gay rival of my former hopes did not long disappoint her expectation, but appeared at Pampeluna in a splendid equipage, accompanied by a number of domestics clothed in rich liveries, and in a style of fashion suited to the dignity of his order and the extent of his fortune. The first time I saw him was in a church where the faithless daughter of Don Gaspard was hearing mass. I felt, without knowing why, a great agitation the moment I beheld

him, or, to say more truly, I had a presentiment that he was the redoubtable rival of whom Theodora had spoken; but, if a doubt had existed, it would soon have been removed; for almost immediately addressing himself to Donna Innes, with a fond and familiar air, she received him, notwithstanding she perceived that I observed them, in a manner which wounded me with jealousy. Instead of restraining herself to spare me the mortification of seeing her bestow her attention upon another, she lavished upon him the sweetest looks, and pierced my heart by the testimonies she gave him of her love.

On quitting the church, he accompanied her to the door of her aunt's house, which he entered like a man who had obtained the permission of Don Gaspard, whilst I, filled with rage and despair, returned to my apartment, and surrendered myself to the severest torments of wounded pride.

This artful deceiver, however, having rightly conjectured that I should not bear the favourable reception she had bestowed upon the knight with perfect tranquillity, took the trouble to write me a billet in the evening, signifying that the person I had seen at church need not afford me the least alarm; that he was an intimate acquaintance of her father's; and that as such she could not well avoid returning his polite attentions to her; but that her behaviour was the effect of mere civility, and nothing more than good manners required, in which the heart had no concern. She expressly declared, in short, that there was but one man in the whole world she was capable of loving, and that that man was myself.

This deceitful letter stung me to the soul, and urged me to revenge. On the approach of evening

I accordingly put on a disguise, and concealed myself in the environs of the faithless creature's house, with a determination to attack my rival whenever chance should throw him in my way. Scarcely had I approached the door before it opened, and a young page, advancing from it towards me, asked me if my name was Signor Don Martin. On my telling him in a low voice that it was, he put a paper into my hands, saying that Donna Innes his mistress desired me immediately to perform the request it contained. Assuring him I would, and giving him a double pistole, with which the blundering youth returned as well contented as if he had discharged his commission without mistake, I hastily returned home, impatient to learn the contents of the billet; in which, on opening it, I read the following words:

"Yes, Don Martin, I will perform the promise I made to you this day. To-morrow at midnight I will be at the garden-gate."

This information increased my fury; and you will easily conceive that, with a bosom alive only to revenge, I passed a painful night. The morning sun seemed loath to rise, and the tediousness of the succeeding day almost exhausted my patience before the appointed hour arrived. The clock struck twelve as I approached the place of assignation, where I almost instantly discovered my detested rival advancing towards the garden gate; but before he entered, "Stop, Don Martin!" exclaimed I; "stop! It is Don Felix de Peralta who thus impedes your guilty pleasures. Listen to my words; and learn, that the perfidious object of your love has not only encouraged my addresses, but has avowed her passion for me in a variety of letters, which will





prove, at the same time, the falsehood of her heart and the truth of my assertion. My feelings call upon me to revenge her perfidy, and to deprive her of the joy she might receive from this expected interview with you."

My favoured rival, struck with this menacing address, replied, "This interruption, Don Felix, is as audacious as it is unjust. On what right can you attempt to prevent my visit to a lady whose affections I have for more than six years entirely possessed? The regard which she may have pretended for you, as a mere entertainment to herself, I disapprove of; for a gentleman of your rank ought not to have been treated with so much levity; but, sir, however you may have been encouraged by her behaviour, you must excuse me from believing she has written to you. The gentlemen of Navarre are celebrated for boasting of female favours which they have never received."

"This assertion, Don Martin," replied I, "is adding insult to injury. My veracity, sir, shall not be slandered with impunity. You must answer immediately this daring affront. Come on, sir, and let me teach you, that the gentlemen of Navarre are as jealous of their honour, and of as high veracity, as those of Biscay."

In uttering these words I drew my sword: my adversary immediately followed my example. We fought on both sides for some time with equal ardour and activity; but Don Martin, unfortunately for him, in endeavouring to parry a thrust, acquitted himself so badly, that the point of my sword went directly through his throat, and instantly deprived him of life.

Leaving my antagonist extended on the ground,

I entered the garden, the gate of which I found half open, and met Donna Innes walking with Theodora in expectation of her lover's arrival. "Perjured woman!" exclaimed I, addressing her in the violence of passion, "you can no longer deceive me; I am acquainted with your perfidy; and I have, this instant, gloriously revenged myself in the death of my rival. Oh, that you loved him a thousand times more than you do, that I might increase your misery while I announce his death; and punish you, through him, for deceiving me! It is true, I shall be obliged to fly from my country and my family; but I shall have the consolation of quitting for ever the presence of so detested a deceiver."

Having uttered these words with all the indignation of a man who listened only to the dictates of revenge, I rushed from the garden, and left Donna Innes, who had fainted away, reclining in the arms of her attendant.

Returning home with all possible expedition, I awakened my father from the comforts of repose, and informed him of this disastrous event. The surprise it occasioned was great indeed; for until that moment he had not even heard of my partiality for Donna Innes; but when he reflected that the event would necessarily force me to fly from the arm of justice, his affliction was more poignant than language can express. Considering, however, that it was a misfortune which could not now be avoided, he presented me with a purse filled with gold and jewels; and mounting me upon one of his fleetest horses, bid me a sorrowful adieu, just as the sun was ushering in the day.

Crossing Navarre, and advancing by long stages

through the principality of Catalonia, I proceeded without resting to Barcelona, where I sold my horse, and embarked, with all possible precipitation, on board a vessel for the port of Genoa. The safety which Italy afforded restored my mind to its former tranquillity ; and as my finances enabled me to travel, I formed a design of viewing the whole of that delightful country. After visiting whatever was curious in Genoa, I purchased a horse ; and, directing my course towards Lombardy, arrived at Milan, where I remained six months.

On bidding my father adieu, it was agreed that I should write to him from the several places I might reside at, under cover to one of his friends, a monk of Pampeluna, who delivered the letters as he received them with his own hands. By this means we reciprocally communicated intelligence to each other. This kind parent, in one of his letters, informed me that the daughter of Don Gaspard was so affected by the circumstances of Trevigno's death, that she had retired into a convent, and that a rumour prevailed, that the brother of Don Martin had departed from Biscay with intention to trace me from place to place, and to avenge the death of his brother. This information, although it gave me no uneasiness, induced me to take such precautions as might prevent surprise. I accordingly concealed my name, and never disclosed to any person the place of my family residence in Spain.

Tired of the pleasures which Milan afforded, I renewed my design of traversing Italy ; and for that purpose directed my course, on horseback, towards Parma.

Towards the evening of the second day's journey,

while I was deep in thought, I inadvertently quitted the road, and followed a path which conducted me into a wide country covered with wood, and intersected with thickets of bramble. Perceiving the mistake, I endeavoured to return into the road I had left, by retracing the path ; but instead of repairing my fault, I found myself enveloped by a deep and dreary glen, from which the darkness of the night, which now closed fast around me, prevented my return. Compelled to remain in this situation until the break of day, I dismounted, and taking the bridle from my horse, that he might graze more conveniently, threw myself on the grass, in expectation that a sound sleep would relieve me from the fatigues of my journey and the calls of hunger ; but as my wearied eyelids were about to close, I suddenly heard the distant cries of ill-omened birds, accompanied, at intervals, by the plaintive sounds of a human voice. Starting from the ground to discover, if possible, the cause of these extraordinary noises, and walking towards the place from whence the sounds seemed to proceed, I discovered, by the favour of a feeble light, which the moon occasionally cast through the dark clouds in which it was involved, the remains of an ancient edifice. It appeared like a chapel fallen into ruins, and become the melancholy abode of bats and screech-owls. Advancing to examine it, I heard more distinctly, every step I took, the noises which resounded from within it. The whole glen sometimes re-echoed to the hideous cries of birds of prey, and at others I clearly discerned something like the groans and lamentations of a female, who, by some strange outrage, had been enclosed against her will within this place of horror.

The desire I felt to develop this mystery induced me to enter the ruins ; but I entered them with a degree of fear and trembling, from which the most intrepid man could not, in my situation, have been free. Curiosity, however, supported my courage, and I walked, with a naked sword in my hand, slowly and cautiously among the scattered fragments of the edifice, until I came to a kind of tomb, from whence a voice, interrupted by sighs and groans, suddenly pronounced these words : "O unhappy woman ! how have I deserved to suffer such cruel treatment !" A deathlike terror struck my heart on hearing these expressions; my mind was dismayed ; and my imagination represented it as a soul consigned to trouble.

Alarmed and agitated, however, as I was, I ventured to speak to the voice I heard ; but my address was such as clearly marked the disordered state of my mind : " Immortal spirit !" exclaimed I, " you who, disengaged from corporeal restraints, expiate in this monument the crimes committed in your mortal state, say, what would you have ? I am ready to do whatever you command."

" Ah ! traitor," replied the voice, " you are not contented with having buried me alive within this horrid grave, but you must add insult to this cruel injury : the lingering and inhuman death which waits me in this horrid sepulchre might fully satisfy your mind."

On receiving this reply, which convinced me that I was in conversation with a living body, my apprehensions vanished.

" Whoever you are," said I to the afflicted female, " know that I am not the author of your mis-

fortunes. I am a traveller, who, having lost his way, was preparing not far from hence to await the return of morn, when I heard your complaint, and have ventured into this retreat to learn its cause ; the fears which your ejaculations inspired deprived me of my senses ; I fancied you a departed spirit, and under that impression exorcised you ; but I am now undeceived ; and if I shall be enabled to render you the least service, it will console me for having missed my way. Lose no time. Come forward from this frightful place and follow me. I have a horse not far hence, and will conduct you wherever you shall direct."

"Oh ! sir," replied the voice, "I cannot, without your assistance, release myself from this horrid dungeon where I am tied with cords ; my tongue, which shall ever hereafter pour forth my gratitude to heaven for your assistance, alone is free."

I accordingly approached and entered the tomb, where I found a woman, not only fettered hands and feet, but to render the scene still more horrible, closely fastened to the dead body of a man. The shocking sight struck terror into my soul, and I retreated involuntarily from the object.

"Generous stranger !" said the lady, "separate the living from the dead : release me immediately from the murdered body to which I am bound, and defeat the vindictive fury of an unjustly jealous husband."

I concluded from these last words that the deplorable state to which this unhappy woman was reduced must be a new Italian method of punishing conjugal infidelity.

Gallantry, however, when called upon to aid a female in distress, is never impeded by a considera-

tion of circumstances ; and, advancing immediately towards the unhappy sufferer, I cut the cords with which she was tied with my sword, released her from her dead companion, and conducted her from the tomb through the surrounding ruins, to the spot where my horse was grazing.

The light of day soon afterwards appeared on the horizon ; and placing the young sufferer behind me on my horse, we followed the first track without knowing to what place it led, and arrived in a short time at Betola.

The lady, who until this time had observed profound silence, on viewing the village, joyfully exclaimed, "I know where we are ; and the place to which I wish to go is not more than two miles distant. Go that road, if you please, sir," added she, pointing to a path : "go that road, and we shall in less than an hour arrive at a farmhouse, where you will be received by persons who will not be insensible of the services you have rendered me ; for you will then restore me to the arms of my beloved parents, to a fond father, to a tender and affectionate mother. O Anselmo ! O Dorothea !" continued she, until interrupted by her tears, "unhappy authors of my existence, what will you feel ? How will your kind hearts bleed with affliction when you learn the unjust and cruel treatment your daughter has received ?"

This apostrophe was followed by such a flood of tears, that although I seriously doubted whether I had rescued from death a victim perfectly innocent, I could not avoid being deeply affected by her distress.

On our arrival at the farmhouse, an aged man and woman were standing at the door. It was Anselmo and Dorothea. Astonished and surprised at perceiv-

ing their daughter, "Just heaven," exclaimed the old man, "it is Lucretia! Why are you here without your husband? Why is he not with you?"

Lucretia could only answer with her tears, which flowed in all the abundance of real feeling and affliction. "Alas!" said the mother, "I am afraid that Aurelio, my son-in-law, has been guilty of some gross misconduct."

At these words the sobs and tears of Lucretia increased so violently, that Anselmo, perceiving there was no probability of deriving any information from her, addressed himself to me, and requested I would relate to them, if I knew it, the cause of her affliction.

I accordingly informed them of the situation and place in which I had found their daughter, but that I was entirely ignorant of the cause which had induced her husband to use so much severity.

While I was giving this detail, which they could not hear without horror, the anguish of Lucretia by degrees abated; and resuming the use of her voice she related the following story in her justification:—

"Aurelio, the person to whom I was espoused," said she, "is a man not only more jealous, but more capable of permitting his feelings to drive him into a violent excess than any other native of Italy. Entertaining suspicion, but upon what appearances I am totally ignorant, that the youth and beauty of one of his domestics had attracted my attention, he stabbed, in a frantic moment of unfounded jealousy, the innocent and unhappy youth; and tying our bodies together with cords, carried us, by the assistance of persons devoted to his humour, in that condition to the place from which this generous stranger has just released me."

Anselmo and Dorothea, who knew the character of Aurelio, and had frequently repented of having given him their daughter in marriage, were penetrated with the keenest anguish at this recital; and they joined their tears to those which still continued to flow from the eyes of Lucretia, who confirmed her innocence in the minds of her parents by this appeal: "If," said she, "I had the least reason to reproach myself, can you imagine that I should thus presumptuously appear before you? Oh no! so far from daring to seek an asylum in your arms, I should have flown with horror from my paternal dwelling, and have endeavoured to hide the shame of disgracing the education you have given me in the remotest corner of the earth."

This affectionate couple gave credit to the asseveration of their lovely daughter, and, secretly reproaching themselves for having married her so imprudently, locked her alternately in their arms with every mark of parental tenderness and contrition.

These transports of fond sorrow having subsided, they bestowed on me a thousand thanks for saving their innocent and lovely child from impending death, and requested me to continue in the farm with them as long as I pleased; but, after passing a day with them, I inquired the nearest road to Parma, and proceeded on my journey to a city celebrated by its being the usual residence of the illustrious prince its sovereign.

Before I had been three days at Parma I was engaged in an adventure which had nearly cost me my life. Curious to learn whether the gallants of Parma chanted the pleasures and the pains of love under the balconies of their mistresses, I walked, one evening after supper, round the city. The clock had

already struck eleven without the sound of a single guitar having reached my ear; but no sooner did the midnight hour arrive than music of all kinds resounded through every street. A concert, seemingly in the Spanish style of music, was performing in one of the squares, and conceiving it to be some young lover of my own country who was serenading the object of his affection, I advanced towards the place.

The music, while I listened to it with pleasure, suddenly stopped; the sound of the violins was succeeded by the clashing of swords; and I soon afterwards discovered a man who was retiring in a posture of defence against three assailants who pressed upon him all together with great violence. Provoked by the inequality of the contest, I drew my sword; and ranging myself on the side of the single combatant, who must, in the event, have fallen a victim to superior numbers, gave him such useful succour that we obliged the assailants to retire, not without some wounds, which in all probability they would not have received if I had not joined the affray.

The gentleman in whose favour I had thus seasonably interposed, appeared so extremely sensible of the services I had rendered him, that he knew not how to discontinue his expressions of gratitude.

"Sir," replied I, in the Castilian language, "the services you have received do not merit such extraordinary commendation. Could I calmly observe one of my countrymen—for if I am not mistaken, you are from Spain—in such imminent danger without affording him assistance?"

"You are not mistaken," replied he; "I am a native of Biscay, and my name is Don Gregorio de

Trevigno. May I request," added he, "to be informed what province in Spain has the honour of your birth? I beg you will let me know to whom I am indebted for the service I have received."

"You must excuse me, sir," replied I, "from gratifying your curiosity, lest you should repent of having received the obligation you express from my hands."

"O heavens!" exclaimed the Biscayan, "can you be Don Felix de Peralta?"

"Yes," replied I, "I am. It was I who killed your brother at Pampeluna. I am the fugitive whom you seek, and whom chance has thrown in such a manner in your way that fortune seems to have rendered the succour my arm has just afforded you a screen of delicacy to shelter me from your vengeance. But I am not inclined to accept a favour so awkwardly bestowed, and I request that you will pay no regard to a service which I should have rendered to any other man as well as to yourself. Consult only your offended feelings, and vindicate your brother's death."

"Would you do so," interrupted Don Gregorio, "if you were in my place? Speak; your sentiments shall guide my conduct."

"You embarrass me," replied I; "if you had spilled my brother's blood, and I had owed my life to you, the voice of gratitude would, I think, have silenced my resentment."

"Then why," replied he, "should I act in a different manner? Do you conceive that my notions upon this subject are less refined than your own? No, no, Don Felix, I know what honour requires from you in this conjuncture; but, however consanguinity may murmur, I will no longer consider you as my enemy. You have yourself repaired the injury my family

received ; since the same sword which extinguished the life of Don Martin has prolonged that of Gregorio. Permit me, further, to assure you, that your generous and gallant behaviour has banished all animosity from my mind, and inclined me to seek that future friendship from you which on my part I am sincerely disposed to bestow."

We accordingly interchanged addresses ; and, after mutual professions of respect and esteem, parted, under promises to visit each other early the ensuing morning ; and each of us was so eager to honour the other with the first visit, that we met on the way.

The usual compliments having passed, Don Gregorio desired that he might have the pleasure of introducing me to a friend of his at court ; and, in compliance with his desire, I immediately accompanied him to the house of Count Guadagni, the Duke's favourite, and first gentleman of his chamber, to whom he presented me, saying, "Permit me to introduce to you Don Felix de Peralta, the mortal enemy whom I sought with so much industry ; for he is now one of my best friends."

"What miracle," exclaimed the Count, "has produced this alteration in your sentiments?"

Don Gregorio then related to him the recent adventure, candidly avowing, that without my assistance he must have lost his life. The Count, having listened to this narrative with great attention, congratulated us on an event which had thus happily terminated an affair of honour, which, in general, ends in the death of one, and sometimes of both of the parties.

Guadagni conceived this to be so singular a circumstance, that he could not avoid communicating it to the Duke his master, who, from mere curiosity,

desired to see and converse with me. The interview afforded so much pleasure to my royal auditor, that he resolved to detain me at the court of Parma ; and, for that purpose, requested my acceptance of a lieutenancy in the Guards ; and as I also enjoyed the patronage and friendship of his favourite, I entertained the high hope of being able, in a short time, to amass a splendid fortune.

I communicated my reconciliation with Gregorio, and my advancement at the court of Parma, to my fond and anxious father ; and it is scarcely necessary for me to say, that his congratulations on both occasions were equally joyful and sincere.

My endeavours to cultivate the friendship and good opinion of the Duke of Parma were so successful, that in a period of less than two years I was promoted to the post of first chamberlain, which had become vacant by Guadagni's death.

Natives never suffer a foreigner to occupy a place of so much importance at court with any degree of quietude or security ; and all the numerous individuals who conceived their merit had been overlooked or slighted by my promotion, raised an envious outcry against me, and endeavoured, by all the arts of factious calumny, to degrade me from the high confidence and esteem in which I was held by my royal benefactor. Combinations were formed amongst the leading courtiers to destroy my power, and they employed all the arts and stratagems ingenuity could suggest to effect their purpose ; but all their exertions were fruitless, and only contributed to fix me more firmly in my exalted station ; for you may conceive that it was no easy task to rob me of the favour of a prince with whose virtues and vices I was equally

well acquainted. The skilful Guadagni had, by means of this knowledge, constantly preserved his credit with his master; and treading with equal adroitness in the steps of my predecessor, I had, in short, discovered, the secret of rendering myself so necessary to the Duke, that he no longer viewed any object except through my eyes. I am convinced that no favourite ever gained a more absolute ascendancy; so great indeed was my power, that I was called the coadjutor of the states of Parma; and the opposing courtiers, finding themselves incapable of making successful resistance, submitted to the predominating influence of my brighter fortunes. But, alas! the authority which had withstood the attacks of a powerful faction, yielded to the superior address of a lady, for whom the Duke entertained a most extravagant affection.

This dangerous rival was the wife of his principal equerry, the Marchioness of Origo; who, although she had passed the meridian of life, was still not only the most striking beauty, but the most artful intriguer of the court. From the first moment she saw the Prince within her power, she formed the resolution of removing me from his confidence, in order that she might possess the entire administration of affairs herself. Aware of her designs, I endeavoured, of course, by every means in my power, to render them abortive; and, as is frequent between the ministers and mistresses of princes, a contest commenced, in which we mutually endeavoured to ruin each other in the mind of the Duke, by every ill office in our respective powers. When I was with the Duke, I seized every occasion to degrade her in his good opinion; and when she was with him my character

also suffered in its turn. The Prince, whose greatest foible was an excessive good nature, listened sometimes to the Marchioness, and sometimes to me, like a ship, which, tossed about by two opposing winds, yields alternately to both.

This formidable rival, unfriendly as she was to my interests, was no enemy, it appeared, to the pleasures of the world. Fame did not give her credit for a more faithful attachment to the Prince, her lover, than to the Marquis her husband. It was against her infidelity that I directed all my batteries. Employing certain spies, whom I induced, by the liberality of my bribes, to watch her conduct with unceasing vigilance, I was at length informed that the lady had lately fallen in love with a comedian of the name of Octavio, who generally played the principal characters at the Prince's Theatre ; that not contented with admitting him almost daily to her toilette, she frequently went to his house in a hired coach, disguised as a common woman ; in short, that there was no reason to doubt but that these interviews were interviews of gallantry.

Overjoyed as I was on receiving this information, I thought it prudent to ascertain its truth before I ventured to reap from it the harvest it seemed to promise ; and with this view I sent to Octavio, and requested that he would do me the favour to sup with me alone in the evening, as I had something of consequence to communicate to him.

The actor of course accepted the invitation, and came to me at the appointed time. "Octavio," said I to him towards the conclusion of the evening, "I have a very unpleasant piece of news to communicate to you. The Duke has been made acquainted with the partiality which the Marchioness of Origo has

lately conceived for you, and that you frequently have secret interviews with each other."

Octavio, excellent actor as he was, turned pale, and discovered great confusion at this intelligence. Without seeming to notice his disorder, I continued my discourse : " You know, Octavio, that I am your friend ; I have given you more than one testimony of it ; and I think I shall not prove myself very unkind in giving you advice upon this occasion. If I were in your situation, I would throw myself at the feet of the Prince, and make a candid confession to him of all that has passed. You are not ignorant of the goodness of his disposition ; a frank and sincere avowal will subdue his anger. I am sure he will forgive your inability to resist the advances of so fine a woman ; and I will not only introduce you to his Highness, but will use my interest with him in your favour."

The actor had too much good sense not to reject such advice from a man whom he well knew to be the mortal enemy of the Marchioness ; and concluding that my only reason for advising him to adopt so delicate a measure was to obtain proof of a fact, the existence of which only rested on suspicion, he chose to deny that he had ever been so presumptuous as to raise even a thought in favour of the Marchioness.

The fact, however, was true, and in two days I was clearly convinced of it.

Early the ensuing morning, one of my spies informed me that the Marchioness was gone, in a hired carriage and in her usual disguise, to Octavio's house ; and that I might, if I pleased, see her return. Dressing myself immediately, and following my conductor, we concealed ourselves a few paces from the come-

dian's house, from whence the lady, whom I recognised by her gait, notwithstanding her disguise, soon issued; but to make assurance doubly sure, I approached and lifted up the veil which concealed her face. At the sight of me she uttered an involuntary scream; I apologised for the liberty I had taken, by pretending that I had mistaken her for another lady; but she ran from me without speaking a word, and jumping into the coach, which was waiting at a short distance, disappeared in a moment.

Charmed with the idea that I could testify from my own view, that she had visited Octavio, I ran to the palace, with an air of triumph, to recount what I had seen; but unfortunately the Duke was gone out, and did not return until two hours afterwards, when, observing the emotion of my countenance, "What is the matter with you?" said the Prince; "you appear agitated."

"Sir," replied I, "the character of your Highness is too dear to me, not to be affected by the base treachery which is practised against you."

"Speak more explicitly," interrupted the Duke. "Who is it that betrays me?—What is the perfidy?"

"The Marchioness," replied I, "is a faithless woman, whom your Highness ought to abandon. Ungratefully forgetting the love with which you honour her"—

"Peralta," interrupted the Prince, looking at me with an angry eye, "take care what you say; for I perceive your hatred to the Marchioness discolours all her actions, and you condemn her, possibly upon false appearances. What new crime can she have committed, that you should brand her with the epithets of treacherous and ungrateful?"

"I should be justified," replied I, "if I were to apply a term still more odious; for she has this morning been with Octavio, the comedian, in a hired carriage, under the disguise of a common woman. I myself saw her issue from the actor's house, where her depraved passion has frequently before conducted her."

"What calumny!" exclaimed the Duke. "Is it possible to impute to the Marchioness such base notions? But, happily for her, I am convinced of her innocence and of your malice. I have this moment returned from the company of that lady, who is so unwell that she has not only been obliged to keep the house the whole morning, but to be bled; and the surgeon has taken from her three porringers of blood, which are now standing on the table in her apartment. What would you say, were I to show you this proof of her innocence?"

"I should say," replied I, "that the blood is not her own, but artfully placed there to screen her guilt."

The Duke censured my obstinacy, and, notwithstanding all I said to support my charge against the accused, seemed to impute all the blame to the accuser.

The three porringers of blood presented a mystery which I resolved immediately to unravel; and, ordering my spies to find out the Marchioness's surgeon and bring him instantly before me, a service which they soon performed, I told him, by way of intimidation, "The Duke commands you, on pain of perpetual imprisonment, to inform me whether you have this morning bled the Marchioness of Origo."

The surgeon turned pale at these words, and replied with a terrified aspect, "There is no occasion for menaces to induce obedience to the commands of my sovereign. In answer to your question, I was this

morning sent for to the Marchioness's house, to bleed one of her female attendants; from whose arm I took three porringers of blood, and came away."

"Then it was not the Marchioness that you bled?" said I.

"No, sir," replied the surgeon; "I did not even see her ladyship."

Upon the surgeon's report, I ventured to assure the Duke that the blood was not drawn from the vein of his mistress, and that she had artfully affected indisposition the better to conceal the fact of her having been that morning with Octavio. The Duke, blinded by the violence of his passion, warmly maintained that she was incapable of such gross duplicity. "I am convinced," said he, "that the Marchioness would disdain to resort to so mean a subterfuge; but, to satisfy myself more fully upon this subject, I am determined immediately to inspect her arm, and if I do not find a recent incision on it with the lancet, I will give entire credit to all you have told me, and abandon the perfidious coquette for ever; but, Peralta," continued he with a stern and menacing aspect, "if there be the appearance of a recent puncture, you may be assured that I will revenge the malicious injuries which you have inflicted, by your rash aspersion on her innocent character."

Being persuaded that the whole of her story to the Duke was a mere fabrication, without any support except her own assertion, I submitted cheerfully to the penalty he imposed. The Prince accordingly visited the Marchioness early in the evening, under pretence of inquiring the state of her health. Of the conversation which passed between them during this important interview I am totally ignorant; but

on the ensuing day, when I presented myself before him, he received me with an air of coldness and disdain. "The Marchioness," said he abruptly, "was bled yesterday morning; it is a fact which I can attest; for I removed the bandage from her arm, and saw, with my own eyes, the incision which the lancet had made. Trouble my repose no longer by such unfounded accusations. I had rather be deceived by a mistress than owe her fidelity merely to a vigilance on her conduct."

Confounded and struck dumb by this peremptory declaration, I could only contemplate with astonishment the falsehood of the surgeon or the artifice of the Marchioness, who, I concluded, had procured a puncture to be made by some other operator. My silence, however, was interpreted by the Duke as unerring evidence of my guilt; and, considering me in the character of a lying informer, abashed by unexpected detection, turned his back upon me, and ordered the captain of his guards to tell me not to appear again at court.

The disgrace to which this sentence of exile at once consigned me, afflicted me for some time with excruciating severity; and my torments were not alleviated by the reflection that I had fallen a victim to the superior artifices of a woman, whose influence it was my settled purpose to destroy; but, at length, philosophy came kindly to my aid, and enabled me to view the high and comfortless stations of ambition with very different sentiments; and religion also interposing its assistance, I adopted notions which, by degrees, detached my mind completely from the world and its concerns. I accordingly quitted the court of Parma, and retired to Genoa; from whence

I seized the earliest opportunity of returning to Spain; and, embarking on board a vessel for that purpose, reached Alicant, where I purchased a horse and proceeded towards Pampeluna; but, like you, missing my road, I arrived, towards evening, at this hermitage, the door of which was opened at my request, and I was received by a venerable old man, who, though eighty years of age, was still able to walk without a stick, and enjoyed the most perfect health. This hospitable inhabitant treated me in the same manner as I have treated you; and the conversations which he held with me perfected my resolution to renounce all future conversation with the world. To conclude my story in a few words, I implored the old man to permit me to continue with him in the enjoyment of this solitary retreat: he granted my request; and I have resided from that moment in this hermitage, occupied only by the hopes of heaven. I did not even visit Pampeluna: the pleasure of seeing my father and my sister was the first sacrifice I made to God. I passed ten years with the virtuous hermit in this humble cell, and ten more have now elapsed since his decease.

The recluse here concluded his narrative; and, returning him thanks for his civility, I told him, with perhaps a smile on my countenance, that I was tempted to follow his example.

"You are yet too young," said he, "to embrace a mode of life which requires that its votaries should be satiated with the pleasures of the world, and be thoroughly satisfied of its vanities and vexations, in order to quit it with propriety. It is the want of this knowledge that fills the cloister with so many unworthy inmates."

CHAPTER XXVII.

VANILLO TAKES HIS LEAVE OF THE HERMIT, AND PROCEEDS TO SARAGOSSA; FROM WHENCE HE RETURNS TO RODENAS WITH GOOD NEWS FOR DON CHRISTOVAL —THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS NEWS.

RISING the ensuing morning before the break of day, and bidding adieu to my host, with repeated thanks for the kind reception he had afforded me, I mounted my horse and jogged on towards Saragossa, where I arrived before noon.

The Governor and his daughter were conversing, in the parlour, with the Bishop of Salamanca when I entered the room; but the moment they perceived me they all rose from their seats, and crowding round me, asked me a thousand questions at the same time:—"How is my son-in-law's health? What news from my nephew?—In what situation have you left my husband?"

"My lords and my lady," replied I, "I have left my master in perfect health; and as to the treatment he receives from his Grace of Albarazin, here are letters which will afford you ample information."—I accordingly drew my papers from my pocket, and delivered to each of them the respective despatch.

I expected that the very long accounts which Don Christoval had given of the several instances of friendship and respect he received at Rodenas would have satisfied their curiosity, but I was mistaken; for they had no sooner read their letters than they began a new course of interrogatories, and obliged

me to relate the most minute particulars, not only of our voyage, but even of the Bishop's castle. The performance of these tasks afforded me but little respite; for dinner was no sooner over than Donna Anna, wishing to make some more particular inquiries, desired me to wait on her.

"Well, Gonzales," said she, "if you have given us, as I have no doubt you have, a faithful report, your master must be extremely well satisfied with so delightful a place, where every person seems so anxious to make him happy. The assistance he derives from the delights of Rodenas enables him, I conceive, to endure my absence with tolerable patience?"

"O madam!" replied I, "entertain a more favourable opinion of the power of your charms, and render more justice to the sentiments of a husband who adores you: it is not easy for any amusement to banish a lady of your merit and beauty from his mind; he is for ever invoking his charming lovely Donna Anna, who seems to accompany all his thoughts, and mix in all his expressions. 'Vanillo,' said he to me, as I was coming away, 'O Vanillo! How I envy you the happiness of seeing my charming Donna Anna, from whom Heaven in its wrath thus cruelly separates me!'"

A celestial smile beamed from the features of Donna Anna while I uttered these words. "Vanillo," said she, with a soft and tender air, "tell me honestly, don't deceive me, does Don Christoval really find the days of our separation tedious and unpleasant?"

"The days, madam!" exclaimed I; "ah! rather say the moments; he would sink under the pangs of absence, if Heaven did not enable him to endure it."

I must confess, however, that I did gild the pill a little; for, although Don Christoval was certainly extremely fond of his wife, he was in no actual danger of dying with grief on account of her absence.

Donna Anna then informed me, that she entertained the most flattering prospects of her husband's speedy return; for that her father had already had two conferences with the relations of the deceased Don Melchior, in which they candidly confessed that he had been the sole aggressor, and seemed well disposed to accommodation. The Bishop, in short, managed so well, that the matter was immediately concluded, and I was despatched to bear the glad tidings to the Castle of Rodenas.

This accommodation procured to Don Christoval too many advantages to permit him to stay any longer at the castle; and accordingly, taking leave of the good Prelate with every testimony of gratitude, he returned gaily to Saragossa; where a charming wife, equally loving and beloved, awaited his return.

On the arrival of Don Christoval at Saragossa, joy and gladness animated every bosom; the hymeneal entertainments were renewed; and the young couple at length tasted, in undisturbed tranquillity, the sweet enjoyments of honourable love.

A period of two months was consumed in balls, concerts, and other amusements, when his Grace of Salamanca returned with his nephew and niece to his diocese. Crossing, by short journeys, Old Castile, we stopped at the Castle of Rodeliana, a palace belonging to the Bishop, situated on the confines of the province of Leon, where we continued for three weeks to receive the visits of the neighbouring nobility and gentry; and, as his Grace was celebrated for his hos-

pitality and polite attention to every description of visitors, the meanest Hidalgos came every day to his table, and, presenting themselves boldly to his Grace, with high feathers in their caps and long swords by their sides, were received in a way not likely to decrease their vanity. At length we returned to Salamanca, and took up our abode in the Episcopal Palace.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CONDUCT OF VANILLO ON HIS RETURN TO SALAMANCA; THE IMPORTANT SERVICE HE RENDERED HIS FRIEND VANEGAS; AND BY WHAT ACCIDENT HE RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE OF SIGNORA DALFA AND THE YILT BERNARDINA.

A PREDICTION, on being discharged from my former service, that I should again return to Salamanca in the course of six or seven years, in a better situation than before, would have been ridiculed; although, as it happened, it would certainly have been true.

I was now secretary to a young nobleman who esteemed me, and commensal to an episcopal palace upon other terms than before; for I no longer dined with the liveried tribe, but, like the almoners, equerries, gentlemen, and *valet-de-chambres*, had my own cover at the major-domo's table, which was served as plentifully at least as that of his Grace.

Vanegas, whom I found precisely in the same situation in which I had left him, that is to say, a chorister of the cathedral, was the first person I went to see. Having cordially embraced each other, he cast his eyes upon my dress, which was both neat and fashionable; and observing my long sword, silk stockings, fine ruffles, and feathered beaver, stared at me with extreme surprise, and congratulated me, poor soul! on the great fortune I must have made since he last saw me. But I soon undeceived him by relating to him the particulars of my Italian expedition, and informed him of my present re-establishment in

the Bishop's family ; on which he rejoiced with unaffected cordiality. "Courage, my good friend," cried he ; "I perceive, however, you are in the road of advancement: you have wisely embarked your fortunes in the service of Don Christoval, who is as liberal as he is accomplished, and will certainly remunerate your attachment. I am delighted to find that fortune favours you so highly."

"But as to yourself, Vanegas," said I, "do you always intend to continue a chorister? An ecclesiastic of your merit might fairly expect promotion. Have you never made any application for a higher situation in the cathedral?"

"Never," replied Vanegas. "Priests in general spend their whole lives in hunting after benefices, which, when obtained, only excite new desires for further promotion ; but, thank Heaven ! I am neither avaricious nor ambitious ; and being contented with my present situation, bad as it is, have never used the least endeavour to procure a better. I can, indeed, say still more ; for there is a stall in our chapter now vacant by the death of the licentiate Baptiste Leon, and I might with justice aspire to succeed him ; but, as I must necessarily undergo the pain of soliciting friends to apply to the Bishop in my favour, and pursue measures which do not perfectly coincide with my temper and disposition, I choose rather to decline the contest with a good grace, than undertake a trouble which may probably end in disappointment. Besides, I have enough to maintain me with decency, and that is all a virtuous divine ought ever to require."

The humble views and mild character of my good old friend quite charmed me ; and, while I openly applauded his noble sentiments, I felt the warmest

inclination to promote his interests ; but, as I could have no right to expect much influence with his Grace, I was perfectly silent on the subject to him, though I resolved not to neglect any means in my power to serve a friend who was so dear to my heart. I accordingly applied immediately to Don Christoval ; and, informing him of the vacancy, requested he would prevail upon the Bishop, his uncle, to appoint my worthy friend, to whom, I assured him, I was under the greatest obligations.

" The disposition which you show, Vanillo, to serve your friend, affords me the highest pleasure," replied Don Christoval. " Friendship is a sacred duty, which men in all ranks of life ought carefully to perform, and therefore I will certainly make the application you desire ; but," continued he, " why do you not rather make this request to my uncle yourself ? I am sure he will be pleased to grant it to you. I know he entertains a great regard for you. Go, go to him, Vanillo ; you will have no occasion, I am certain, for my assistance upon this occasion."

The Prelate and I were in truth upon excellent terms with each other. Being entertained by the gaiety of my answers, he never failed to converse with me whenever we met. The good man, indeed, was not one of those fastidious gentlemen, whom nothing can divert but pointed sayings and seasoned repartees. A risible blunder, or any joke which tended to raise an innocent laugh, was more acceptable to him than the finest points in Martial's epigrams.

Early one morning, while he was alone in his study, I ventured to wait upon him, and request the vacant prebend. " How, Vanillo ! " exclaimed the Bishop, smiling, " are you inclined to become a member of

the church? Can you perform the laborious duty of a canon?"

"Why not, sir?" replied I. "I can say my breviary, and eat my four meals a day, as well as any man."

"Yes," replied his Grace; "and it seems that your modesty is equal to your sobriety."

"Nearly so, my lord," replied I, "and my learning also in proportion; and therefore your Grace perceives I am not unqualified to fill a stall in your cathedral."

"Why, it does seem, indeed," replied his Grace, laughing aloud, "that I cannot, without doing great injustice to your merit, refuse your request. But tell me, Vanillo," continued he, resuming a serious air, "for whom is it that you solicit so earnestly this vacant stall? Does your candidate really deserve to possess it? You should be very certain upon this point; for you will recollect, that by procuring church preferment for a friend, you thereby become, in a certain degree, responsible for his virtue."

"Oh! sir," replied I, "the ecclesiastic in whose favour I am applying does not want sureties."

"Who is this virtuous character?" said the Bishop; "for there are but few of his description in my cathedral."

No sooner, however, did I mention the name of the chorister Vanegas, than the Prelate replied with an air of satisfaction, "You are right, Vanillo; he is indeed a proper person. You could not name another man I should so well approve of. He is an honest man, of correct manners and noble sentiments; and I wish all my choristers were half as wise as he is."

Returning my very humble thanks to the reverend Prelate for having granted me this favour, I carried

the glad tidings immediately to my friend ; who, on perceiving my emotion, exclaimed with alarm, as I entered his apartment, " Good God ! Vanillo, what is the matter with you ? What does this violent agitation import ? "

" It imports," exclaimed I, " that you are appointed to succeed the licentiate Baptiste Leon. The Bishop has, at my request, conferred on you the vacant prebend; and I seize with eager joy this opportunity to convince you that I can never forget the kind offices you have rendered me."

The modest chorister, less delighted with a promotion which rendered him easy and independent for life, than with the feelings of gratitude which had procured it him, burst into tears of joy, and clasping me with rapture in his arms, expressed sentiments which made me feel, with exquisite sensibility, that there is no pleasure equal to that which results from serving a real friend.

As I was returning from this interesting scene, I accidentally met with that ingenious scholar, Don Ramirez de Prado, the man who, while we lodged together in friendly intercourse at the house of Dr. Canizares, taught me wit by easing me of my money. Recollecting each other at the same instant, " What pleasure I feel," cried he, " in meeting with Signor Vanillo Gonzales, my old companion and my worthy friend, after a separation of six years ! From whence do you come ? What have you been doing since the day you vanished so suddenly from the University ? "

" I have been travelling for some years in Italy," said I.

" And I," said he, " have been at Madrid, where I should have remained at this moment, if the death of

my father, and my anxiety to possess myself of his fortune, had not recalled me to this country, which, you know, is the place of my birth." He was in fact an Hidalgo of Corita, a populous town about three-and-twenty miles from Salamanca.

Don Ramirez, of whom I inquired after Signora Dalfa and her niece Bernardina, informed me that although he had not seen them lately, he was not ignorant of their present situation. "The aunt," said he, "resides at Toledo, and kindly assists the Governor of Castile to consume the emoluments of his office; while her niece riots at Madrid, where she is supported by Count Medallin, in the highest style of fashionable folly and extravagance."

"These good ladies," said I, "had no lovers in this style when I lavished on them my pistoles; but women of intrigue frequently end where they ought to have begun. It seems, however, as if these gentlemen were fonder of the bran than the meal."

Don Ramirez, after this conversation, informed me that he was obliged to return almost immediately to Madrid; but that he certainly would not go away without seeing me again.

The promise was voluntarily made; but whether he really forgot it, or had reasons for not calling, his promise was never performed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT WHICH HAPPENED THREE MONTHS AFTERWARDS AT THE EPISCOPAL PALACE ; THE REVOLUTION IT PRODUCED ; AND THE COURSE WHICH VANILLO STEERED BY THE ADVICE OF VANGAS.

THE mode of life we enjoyed in the Episcopal Palace was the happiest imaginable ; for, what is very extraordinary in a nobleman's house, where envy and malice generally prevail, no faction or animosity whatever existed. But while time flowed on in uninterrupted felicity, a melancholy event took place, which spread dismay and consternation through every department in the palace. The Bishop became dangerously ill ; and his doctors, who at first assured us that, notwithstanding his advanced age, the disorder was not likely to be fatal, despatched him, in defiance of their own prognostics, with such prompt dexterity, that he had not even time to make his will.

This circumstance caused great affliction, particularly to those domestics whose long services fairly entitled them to extraordinary recompense ; but Don Christoval, finding himself the Bishop's sole heir, generously dried up their tears, by promising to allow them pensions according to their deserts. Unfortunately for them, however, Don Christoval was not allowed time to perform his promise ; for only a few days after he had attended his uncle to the grave, he was thrown from his horse while he was hunting, and received a contusion, of which he died in two hours.

after his fall. The young widow, indeed, remembered and rewarded their faithful services, but it was by presents of such moderate value, as was scarcely sufficient to raise a sense of gratitude in their hearts. As for myself, the loss of my dear master affected my mind to such a degree, that in the excess of my grief I was tempted to immure myself in the great convent of Franciscan Friars for the remainder of my life. Happily my friend Vanegas, whom I consulted upon this extraordinary measure, convinced me, without much eloquence, that the cloister was not my element, and prevented me from executing this rash design. "I am well acquainted with your character," said he : "you are by nature light and volatile; you would scarce have entered your novitiate before you would be disgusted with monastic life ; and I am sure the examples of the monks would not be sufficiently powerful to turn your discontent into a vocation. Let me rather advise you," added he, "to go to Murcia, and visit your relations, particularly your uncle, Damien Carnicero, the protector of your infancy. From what you have related to me concerning him, it seems probable that he may have amassed by this time considerable wealth, and perhaps you will not have long to wait before you enjoy the rich inheritance. Suppose even that he should be dead, you being, as you have assured me, his heir, you will be the better able to call to an account those relations who have possessed themselves of his property."

As the Prebend's advice coincided with my own sentiments on this subject, I resolved to follow it; and bidding him adieu, departed from Salamanca, and arrived, by the assistance of the muleteers, at Madrid ; from whence pursuing, by the same means,

the road to Cuenca, I reached, in eight days afterwards, the city of Murcia, which I could not behold again without emotions of the highest pleasure.

Conceiving it would be prudent to make some inquiries respecting my uncle's situation before I ventured to his house, I alighted at the first hotel, where, without making myself known, I entered into a long conversation with the host, who appeared to be the very man who could best inform me of everything it was necessary I should know. "Pray," said I, "is Damien Carnicero still alive, and does he still continue principal surgeon to the City Hospital?"

"He may be said to be still alive," replied the host, "if you can call an old man, who is paralytic in every limb, a living animal. He has long been unable to follow his profession, and is condemned to pass his expiring days either in his bed or in his arm-chair."

"Is he supposed to be rich?" said I.

"Rich as a Jew," replied the host; "and truly it would be wonderful if he were not, after having practised surgery with success so many years; for this is now a very lucrative profession, and Carnicero, being both a miser and a quack, contrived to turn both his money and his trade to greater advantage than any other man. But I pity the poor devil for having given himself so much trouble to amass wealth, when he has no children to enjoy it; his only heirs are a nephew and a niece, who left Murcia about twelve or fifteen years ago, and have not since been heard of. The members of the hospital, however, may possibly be benefited by their absence."

This conversation convinced me that my visit to Murcia was not a bad speculation; and in order to

prevent the members of the hospital from profiting by my absence, I went early on the ensuing morning to the mansion of my dying uncle, who was now confined entirely to his bed, on one side of which sat, in close conference, a venerable-looking monk of the order of St. Dominic, and on the other a celebrated doctor of physic; the first to render all possible benefit to—his convent, and the last to increase the quantity of his fees.

The old man recollected me the moment he cast his eyes upon me. "By St. Coma and by St. Damin," cried he, "here is my nephew Vanillo, whom I never expected to see again."

Approaching the bed, and embracing him with a mingled transport of interest and affection, half fig, half raisin, I endeavoured to testify that I felt extreme pain to find him in so dangerous a condition; but he cut me short, by saying, in a tone of stoicism, "Do not let us talk upon that subject, my nephew; we must all, sooner or later, end our days. Seventy-two long years have the fates spun out my life, and it is now quite time that their shears should cut the thread." Having pronounced these words, he expressed a desire to converse with me in private. The doctor and the divine accordingly withdrew; the countenance of the last, as it appeared to me, betraying strong symptoms of mortification at the unexpected arrival of an immediate heir.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PRIVATE CONVERSATION WHICH MASTER DAMIEN CARNICERO HAD WITH HIS NEPHEW.

MY uncle perceiving we were alone, "Well, Vanillo," said he, "you are once more in the house where you were reared. Tell me, my boy, from whence did you come. Give me an account of what you have been doing since you quitted me. Recollecting your aversion to surgery, I conclude you have embraced some other profession; and it affords me great pleasure to perceive that you do not return to your family in the habit of a prodigal son; for if appearances may be relied on, fortune has not been unfriendly to you."

"No, thank Heaven!" replied I, "fortune, which has always favoured me, has placed me in a situation with which I am perfectly contented, and from which nothing but the desire I felt of seeing you could have induced me to return. The ties of consanguinity and gratitude have impelled me to abandon the court of the Duke of Ossuna, Viceroy of Naples, to enjoy the felicity of living at Murcia with an uncle to whom I am under so many obligations."

"Why," said Mr. Damien, "what employment then had you at the Court?"

"I was formerly the Duke's page," replied I, "and am now one of his equerries. His Excellency, to whom I applied for permission to return to Spain for the purpose of seeing you, commended my pious

resolution, and granted me a leave of absence accordingly."

I shall leave the reader to judge, from this example of my veracity, how steadily I adhered to the truth, when I afterwards related to this good man the whole history of my past life. I never indeed adhered to it, except when it did me some honour, which I confess was not very frequent, but detailed falsehood after falsehood, just as it seemed best to answer the purpose of the moment. Anxious, in short, to appear a man of probity in the opinion of my good uncle Damien, or, in other words, to make myself more sure of his fortune, I did not scruple to fortify and adorn my story by mixing falsehood with fact; and it produced an admirable effect.

"You are welcome home, my dear Vanillo," replied my uncle, when I had finished my romance; "the candid and ingenious manner in which you have related your voyage to Italy, convinces me that you are not deficient in moral sentiment; and I rejoice more particularly at your return because, not knowing what was become of you, I was about to bequeath all my property to the Holy Fathers of the Convent of St. Dominic, and the members of the Hospital. Yes, my dear child, I was upon the very eve of piously committing this injustice; but thanks to Heaven, who without doubt has sent you here to prevent it, you are returned to your family, and there is no longer any danger of the riches you have so just a right to being carried away by the hands of strangers."

Convinced by this discourse that I had had a very narrow escape, I seized the palsied hand of my dying uncle, and, kissing it with an air of tenderness and

gratitude, thanked him for his kind attention. A testator, however strongly he may be prejudiced against his heir, must always become the dupe, if the heir is well versed in dissimulation. The good man entertained no doubt of my affection; my professions of sorrow even touched his heart. "Vanillo," continued he, "it is therefore my intention to leave you all the wealth which I have gained in Murcia; but you alone shall enjoy it. I will not give a *marvedis* to your sister Inesilla, who had scarcely attained her fourteenth year when she eloped with a young officer in the Guards, to Catalonia, and has not since been heard of; but I have no doubt she is living, to the shame of herself and the dishonour of her family, in a state of concubinage. She is so far from being entitled to share any part of my fortune, that she does not even deserve to be remembered."

Thus spoke her good uncle; and I confess that, like a good brother, I was so far from attempting to defend my sister's character, that I affected great indignation at her base and unworthy conduct; and the old gentleman a few days afterwards sealed, signed, and delivered his last will; in which no mention whatever was made even of the name of this unfortunate girl: I was appointed his whole and sole legatee.

The only favour which my kind uncle could now add to his bounty was to die; and he soon afterwards conferred this last kindness on me, and thereby enabled me, while he was passing into the other world, to take possession of his effects in this. The property, which amounted to nearly twenty thousand ducats, had been fairly and legally acquired by grilling people out of their complaints; for the reader

will scarcely forget the mode which this able operator followed, and the anodyne manner by which he cured the megraine and dropsy.

Perceiving myself so well provided for, I experienced the ordinary effect of riches. I became as proud as a priest, and, like the Gripus of Plautus, when he found a treasure, renounced philosophy, and thought only of the means of pleasure. "Vanillo," said I to myself, "you are now in opulence, and what the world calls a happy man. You may now assume the deportment of a gentleman. Thrice happy are young men of your disposition, whose fathers or uncles draw blood or drink water all their lives to leave them wherewith to enjoy themselves. Let me honour such parents and relations, rather than those who devour their fortune, to the disappointment of their heirs. Since you possess wealth, it will be no longer necessary to have masters. Throw off the yoke of servitude, and make a brilliant figure in the world."

It will be unnecessary, I conjecture, to tell my friendly readers that I resolved so to do ; and having disposed of my real estates, and converted my dirty acres into shining pistoles and brilliant doubloons, I quitted Murcia, attended by my suite; which consisted of a valet, mounted like myself on a handsome mule, and a mule driver, who had the care of a third mule, loaded with a large mail, in which my riches were enclosed.

The city of Madrid appearing to me better suited than any other to an heir of my disposition, that is, to a young man who was inclined to ruin himself as fast as possible, I directed my course with great expedition towards that great and splendid metropolis.

CHAPTER XXXI.

*THE ARRIVAL OF VANILLO AT MADRID—WHAT PERSON
HE MET AT THE HOTEL IN WHICH HE RESIDED—THE
CONVERSATION THEY HAD WITH EACH OTHER.*

ON my arrival at the metropolis of the Spanish monarchy, I fixed my residence in the vicinity of the Sun-gate, at a hotel, in which the first person I saw was Don Ramirez de Prado. We repeatedly saluted each other with transport, and exhibited on both sides a higher degree of joy at our meeting than either of us really felt. "What brings you to Madrid?" said Don Ramirez. "Do you intend to make it your constant residence?"

"I intend so to do," replied I; "all other cities in the world, not even excepting the several capitals of Europe, appear to me petty villages when compared with Madrid, which is the only place where men of spirit ought to live and die."

Prado smiled at my observation. "You must be a sincere admirer of the metropolis," said he, "to speak of it in these terms. I acknowledge it is a delightful city; but I am forced at the same time to confess, that in order to enjoy its delights it is necessary to be rich; for pleasure is certainly more expensive here than in any other place: are you in a condition to purchase them at a high price?"

"In truth I am not," said I.

"Nor I either," replied Prado, "although it is not long since I was at Salamanca to receive my patri-

mony, which was sufficiently large to have enabled me to live at Madrid in the style of a gentleman ; but, to tell you the truth, I have already disposed of the greater part of it, and was in an excellent train to get rid of the remainder, when, by the most extraordinary event imaginable, I suddenly became prudent and discreet."

I could not avoid laughing in my turn at these words. I requested Don Ramirez to inform me by what possibility a young libertine could be so immediately reclaimed, when old ones generally continue the character during their lives.

"If," said he, "you are really desirous to be informed of the means by which that reformation was effected, do me the favour to accompany me to my apartments, for I lodge in this hotel, and I will recount to you the history of my conversion.

Curiosity induced me to follow Don Ramirez to his chamber, where, having entered and taken our seats, he began as follows :—

The History of Don Ramirez de Prado.

The ardent inclination for the fair sex which Nature has implanted in my bosom seduced me, even while I was a pensionary student with Dr. Canizares. Signora Dalfa, who was at that time distinguished by the appellation of *the Charming Widow*, was the first object that attracted my attention ; not so much indeed by her beauty, as by a certain talent which she possesses in an eminent and peculiar degree, of seducing the affections of young men, and which, it is said, she very frequently exercised even during the life of her husband ; but while she inspired me with love, I think, coquette as she was, she

felt, if I may say so without being thought vain, some little affection for me. Her house was open to me whenever I pleased, and she always received me with much seeming cordiality. It is true I enjoyed this pleasure in common with several other students ; for access to her house was not, like that to the Temple of Ceres, forbidden to man. Her company, however, was selected with great judgment ; for all her visitors, except myself, had purses lined with gold, and were, in general, the sons of opulent parents, whose coffers they constantly drained to enable themselves to give handsome entertainments to this charming widow and her niece Bernardino, whose budding beauties were just beginning to render her an object of attention.

It was not long before this lovely female enjoyed the triumph of her charms. The fame of her extraordinary beauty soon reached the ears of those young men who are ever vigilant to discover this inferior class of fashionable characters ; many of whom tempted her virtue, and the eloquence of the most generous was of course the best received. But I, though almost moneyless, was never refused admittance to the house. To recompense this want of cash, however, I frequently introduced older students, who were able to pay the reckoning, and taught these apprentices of love how to defray the expenses of instruction.

"I am not ignorant of this part of your history," interrupted I with a smile ; "you contrived to employ my doubloons in the service of these nymphs. Allow me, however, to say, that it is acting a part not quite suitable to the character of a gentleman."

"I acknowledge it," replied Prado ; "but you must

excuse such conduct in a young student, whose passion overwhelmed every other consideration. Besides, Vanillo, between ourselves, where is there a man who can recall all the actions of his past life without feeling a secret shame at having done something his mind disapproves? 'There is no man,' says a Spanish author, 'who, if he examines his past conduct with scrupulous attention, but must confess that he has committed more than one shameful and unworthy action.'"

The blush of conscious guilt glowed on my cheeks while Don Ramirez uttered this quotation. The observation is true. What mortal has been *integer vitæ scelerisque purus?* Is it you, Vanillo? If you think so, you must have forgot the way in which you discharged the pious commission of the Licentiate Salablanca, and the dropsical patient in the Hospital of Murcia. You best know the manner in which you obtained from them those seducing pistoles which Don Ramirez induced you to expend. Truly you impute dishonourable actions to him with a good grace. Are you not a thousand times more guilty than he?

These reflections were silently made without interrupting Prado, who continued his history in this manner:

Dr. Canizares, perceiving that I totally neglected my studies, and not being ignorant of the cause of it, privately exhorted me, in a friendly though philosophic manner, to discontinue my visits to Signora Dalsa and her niece; but the only effect of his remonstrance was a restraint of three days; for on the fourth I renewed my acquaintance with her as usual, in despite of his admonitions; and the Doctor, piqued at the ill success of his eloquence,

not only threatened to inform my father of my misconduct, but he extended his care of me so far as to put his threats in execution ; in consequence of which I shortly after received a letter from my father Don Balthazar de Prado, in which, without any expression of discontent, he commanded me to return to Corita immediately. I obeyed the injunction without hesitation ; and soon after my arrival, he addressed me, with great complacency, in the following manner :

“ My dear son, your neglect of the admonitions of your tutor was not the reason of my recalling you so suddenly from the University ; but, as you have now attained a proper age, and acquired a sufficient stock of learning to answer all the purposes I have in view, it is time to think of establishing you in life. Don Roderigo de Calderona, the Duke of Lerma’s secretary, or I might rather say colleague, is my particular friend, and I trust he will procure you some office under government. I have already informed him of my intention to send you, under his auspices, to Madrid. He will, I am assured, receive and treat you as the son of his dearest friend. I do not, however, mean to confine you to the drudgery of the civil departments of office ; and, therefore, if you prefer a situation in the army, he will, from his interest as commander of the German Guards, procure you a commission in one of the regiments ; but let me advise you to reflect seriously before you adopt your line in life.”

On my arrival at Madrid, about two months after this exhortation, I immediately waited on Don Roderigo, who no sooner read the letter of introduction which my father had written to him, than he received me, notwithstanding the natural phlegm

and haughtiness of his temper, with every demonstration of civility and friendship. He asked me what profession I intended to pursue, and the kind of appointment I wished to procure. On my telling him that I had not yet determined upon the subject, he requested me, whenever I should be enabled to make up my mind, to come to him, and added, that he would exert his best endeavours to assist me; requesting me, at the same time, to assure his good old friend, my father, that no consideration should induce him to neglect the interests of his son.

Delighted at being thus favourably received by a man whose power was capable of achieving whatever he pleased, I seized on every opportunity to inspect into the nature of the civil and military employments, in order to find out which of them was most likely to suit my inclination. The behaviour and manner of living of both these orders were equally flattering to youthful vanity. When I observed the lowest clerks in their respective offices acting the parts of petty ministers of state, I determined to choose the civil department; but when I saw subalterns assuming the air and authority of commanders-in-chief, I declared for the army. I wavered a long time, undetermined which line to choose; but at length I preferred the sword to the pen; and on informing Don Roderigo of the choice I had made, he not only promised me an ensigncy, but, in about two months afterwards, presented me with the colours. Forgetting from that moment that I was merely a schoolboy, without either wisdom or experience, I pressed myself into the company of my brother officers, who, I must confess, generally encouraged the advances I made to keep them company. Among

other military acquaintances which I formed, was one with a lieutenant, of the name of Steinboc; and the natural conformity of our dispositions soon united us so closely, that we were almost inseparable. This officer was about eight-and-twenty years of age, extremely elegant in his person, and affable in his manners, of high spirit, extraordinary understanding, and incorruptible integrity.

Such a friend might have proved a second Mentor to a wild and giddy youth, who had not yet attained the twentieth year of his age; but unfortunately he stood in great need of a preceptor himself; for his passions, like mine, were strong and irregular, and, if he had undertaken to guide my conduct, we should certainly have resembled the blind leading the blind. Pleasure, it will easily be conceived, was the great delight of two such companions, and our parents kindly furnished us with the means of pursuing it. Steinboc, in particular, frequently received such large remittances from Germany, which was his native country, as placed him in a condition to treat our female acquaintances, not only frequently, but with magnificence.

One day this favourite associate addressed himself to me in high spirits: "Don Ramirez," said he, "I have a valuable discovery to communicate to you. I can introduce you to a house where you will see two young and beautiful Genoese; they are sisters, and live under the protection of an aunt, who has lately come to reside with them at Madrid."

Steinboc had scarcely pronounced these words, when I pressed him so anxiously to conduct me immediately to the house of these lovely foreigners,

that, while he acceded to my request, he could not help smiling at my impatience.

The moment I fixed my eyes upon the aunt, I thought I beheld Signora Dalfa, so much did she resemble that lady; but while I was gazing upon her amiable person with exquisite pleasure, her two nieces appeared in all their charms, and, unfortunately for their aunt, justly diverted my admiration. My eyes could behold no other objects than these youthful beauties, whose brilliances dazzled my sight, and made the deepest impression on my heart. Donna Theodora, the eldest sister, delighted me by her sensible aspect and modest mien; but the life and vivacity of the younger was quite enchanting.

Having enjoyed the felicity of a long conversation, we quitted the house, and, as we walked along the street, "To which of the sisters," said Steinboc, "do you give the preference?"

"You ask me, my friend," replied I, "a very embarrassing question; both of them seem to me so amiable that I really am at a loss to decide how to give a preference; but if I were absolutely obliged to choose I think I should give my hand to Theodora."

"And I," cried Steinboc, "should throw myself at the feet of Donna Innes; not that she is in my opinion more lovely than her sister, but that a certain *je ne sais quoi* inclines me to her. A whimsical idea has just occurred to me," continued he, laughing; "suppose, for the sake of diversion, we were to make love to them: do you address Theodora, and I will attach myself to Donna Innes. Let us devote our time to the service of the charming Genoese, make warm and passionate love to them, and spare no pains to induce them to listen favourably to our vows; they well de-

serve to be ranked among the number of our conquests."

Acquiescing, with heedless temerity, in this romantic proposal, we resolved to commence our operations on the afternoon of the ensuing day. After paying our respects in flattering expressions to the aunt, and seating ourselves by the side of these lovely charmers, we opened, with insidious gallantry, the soft siege of love, in which, as Steinboc was in the habit of associating with the actresses of the theatre, and I had recently left the school of Signora Dalsa, we respectively acquitted ourselves with admirable dexterity. To the usual entertainments we contrived to add a collation of fruits and other refreshments, of which, after great ceremony, they agreed at last to partake; and, having passed a very agreeable evening, we bade them adieu.

While we were walking home, we respectively asked each other what impressions we had been capable of making on the hearts of our mistresses. "As for myself," said Steinboc, "I perceive that Donna Innes is a lively, laughing girl, who turns everything I say into ridicule. I could not persuade the giddy girl to listen to me seriously."

"And as to myself," said I, "I find that, with all my rhetoric, I am no farther advanced than you are. Theodora, during our conversation, preserved a cold silence, and scarcely seemed to listen to my discourse: this may, perhaps, be a feint, but it looks inauspicious; and, if you will take my advice, we shall rest upon our arms; the siege we have undertaken will be of too long duration."

"You must not be so soon discouraged," replied the German; "it is the common subtlety of the sex

to appear insensible to the first addresses of those lovers whose hearts they wish to inflame. Let us continue our addresses, and rely upon my prediction that we shall soon see these provoking Genoese change their behaviour."

This prediction proved true. They became, day after day, more tractable. Donna Innes began by degrees to turn an attentive ear to the blandishments of Steinboc, and the cold bosom of Theodora appeared sensible to mine. This change of sentiment, although it might fairly be attributed to the moneys we began to expend on them, and to the rich presents we sent them, we ascribed, in the vanity of youth, to the influence of personal merit. But our success was attended with very serious and unexpected consequences; for, while we were thus endeavouring to inspire the bosoms of these beautiful Genoese with love, the subtle passion stole imperceptibly into our own. Donna Innes gained by degrees such an empire over the heart of Steinboc that he could not refrain from making her serious promises of marriage; and although I resisted, for some time, the persuasions of Donna Theodora, who anxiously exerted herself to involve me in a similar folly, I was at length vanquished by the tears which my resistance caused her to shed, and I made her the same promise which my friend had made to her sister.

Having gained these points, we were considered as husbands elect, and permitted to act like masters of the house. We accordingly requested that the aunt would no longer suffer the visits of two gentlemen whose manners had for some time excited our jealousy; for, as the family were now entirely supported at our expense, we thought it not unreasonable that we should superintend and direct its pleasures.

One of these objectionable visitors was an alcade, and the other an old governor, who, while they pretended to admire the aunt, were secretly directing their attention towards her nieces. Their personal figures, it is true, did not render them very formidable rivals, but we had been informed that they were reputed to be immensely rich, and extremely lavish of money in the indulgence of their desires.

The affectionate aunt, who knew well what she was about, immediately made this sacrifice to our fears, for which we thought ourselves under great obligation ; but the sequel will discover the extent of her claim upon our gratitude for this seeming condescension.

Receiving soon afterwards a letter from Corita, informing me that my father was so dangerously ill that the physician despaired of saving his life, I showed it to Don Roderigo de Calderona, who seemed to be greatly affected by the danger of his friend ; and, after telling me that, by the strict rules of the service, I was not permitted on any account to quit my station, but that, under these circumstances, I must visit my father, and that he would take all the consequences of my absence upon himself, he desired me to set off immediately : "and may the joy," continued he, "which Don Balthazar will feel on seeing you, contribute to preserve his life."

I could not, however, leave Madrid without bidding adieu to my charming Theodora, who, when I announced the occasion of it, was so affected with affliction at my departure, that she fainted into my arms, and it was with great difficulty that her aunt, her sister, Steinboc, and myself, brought her to her senses. She uttered, indeed, such distressful cries,

and shed such torrents of tears upon the occasion, that I might have suspected they did not proceed from the natural feelings of the heart. These testimonies of attachment, whether real or affected, made great impression upon my mind. I was forced to tear myself from her arms. The moment I was free I mounted my horse and travelled with all possible diligence to Corita, where I found Don Balthazar dying, or, to speak with more propriety, nearly dead. Unable to speak, and totally deprived of his faculties, his departing spirit seemed only to wait for my arrival; for he expired, almost instantly, in my arms. Unnatural, indeed, must my feelings have been, if the death of a parent so deserving of regret had not deeply wounded my heart; and, shedding a torrent of tears, I followed his remains to the grave with unfeigned affliction. His estate, which was clear and encumbered, and of which I took immediate possession, made me unexpectedly master of a fortune to the amount of fifty thousand crowns. I let part of the landed property for a thousand crowns a year, and turned the remainder into money as soon as possible, with a view to return to Theodora, whose absence I began to feel it irksome to sustain. My impatience, indeed, to see her again was so great, continued Ramirez, that I remember I quitted Salamanca without performing the promise I made to call upon you, but the distraction of my mind will, I trust, form my excuse. On my arrival at Madrid I immediately visited my friend Steinboc, to inquire how Donna Theodora had conducted herself during my absence. "With great prudence," said he; "I have not seen any visitor enter the house; and, what ought to afford you still greater satisfaction, she has not enjoyed one moment of tranquillity

since you left her. At least, I can assure you, that when I have seen her she has appeared to be oppressed by the deepest melancholy. Justice obliges me to render to you this testimony of her fidelity."

"You give me new raptures," exclaimed I, "in affording me this agreeable information. How sweet it is to the mind of a lover, who feels a strong attachment to his mistress, to be convinced that she is worthy of his affection!"

"Since you are so satisfied with the conduct of Theodora," replied my friend, "you will now, of course, make her your wife."

"Yes," replied I, "immediately; but have you, my friend, relinquished your resolution to espouse Donna Innes?"

"No: on the contrary," said he, "I intend inviolably to preserve the faith I have sworn to her; it is the warmest wish of my heart."

The charming Genoese, so far from contradicting the report of Steinboc, exhibited, on seeing me, a thousand demonstrations of tenderness. In proportion to the depth of her affliction on my departure, was the extravagance of her joy on my return.

To prove the satisfaction I felt on finding myself so sincerely beloved, I freely disbursed my money in making presents, not only to Theodora and her sister, but even to her aunt; and by liberalities, thus judiciously bestowed, as well as by balls, feasts, concerts, little collations, and a thousand other idle expenses, I dissipated, by regular degrees, more than a moiety of my patrimony. My prodigality, like my joy, was unbounded; and I should, without doubt, have ruined myself completely, if, by the interposition of Heaven,

we had not discovered what was passing during our absence at the house of our Genoese.

The kind aunt, who had rendered us so sensible of the sacrifice she had made by dismissing the alcade and the governor from her house, as I have already mentioned, had concerted her measures so adroitly with these gentlemen, that they were introduced almost every evening the moment we went away.

On receiving this information, which, on examination, appeared to be well founded, we held a council to deliberate on the species of vengeance it would be proper to inflict on the deceitful harpies: to burn their house and put our rivals to death were the first ideas which rage presented to our minds; but, as our anger subsided, we became by degrees more rational, and judging it prudent to avoid all publicity upon the subject, which would only render us ridiculous in every company, and raise a laugh at our expense, we prudently resolved not to announce our disastrous adventure, but to punish the perfidy of these female deceivers with silent contempt.

Don Ramirez de Prado here ended his narrative, with an observation, that the characters of women are not easily developed. "Who," said he, "could have imagined these Genoese capable of playing us such a trick? Ah, the devils! But I ought to congratulate my good fortune in having saved my estate of a thousand crowns a year; for, if their tricks had not been discovered they would not have left me a single pistole. This event," continued Ramirez, "produced much serious reflection in my mind, and made me resolve to renounce the pursuits of gallantry; and,

since that period, I have lived a regular life, of which my purse has felt the good effects."

"And your friend Steinboc," said I, "has he also been deluded into wisdom?"

"I do not know what has become of him," said Prado; "he left Madrid about three weeks ago to return to Germany, and I have not yet heard from him; but he has sworn to me a hundred times that he will, throughout the remainder of his life, keep a watchful eye upon his heart; for Love, he says, is the gulf of misery. If you, Gonzales, are possessed of wealth, let me advise you to follow our example; for wealth was intended to adorn the bowers of happiness, and not to be buried in the gulf of misery."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTERS VANILLO SUPPED WITH THE SAME EVENING; AND THE DEBATE IN WHICH HE ENGAGED WITH ONE OF THE COMPANY.

I SHOULD have prolonged the conversation with Don Ramirez, if the host had not interrupted it by announcing that the gentlemen who generally supped at the hotel were already seated in the room, and that supper would be served up immediately.

Prado inquired whether Don Gaspard de Messagna was there, and the host informed him that he would certainly attend.

"So much the better," replied Prado ; "we shall see an original character whose conversation will entertain us. Prepare, Vanillo, to behold a nobleman in full-blown pride, a little Hidalgo, from the borders of Alcala, whose whole estate consists of a thatched cottage, and at most three acres of land. Proud of possessing so fine a domain, he conceives himself as rich as a grandee ; and if, in walking around this decayed hovel, which he arrogantly calls his Chateau, he happens to meet a sportsman, 'I warn you, sir,' he cries, 'from trespassing upon my estate.' This coxcomb," continued Prado, "can only talk of his nobility ; he pretends a descent from the royal line of Pelagus ; and boasts of being related, either by consanguinity or alliance, to the noblest families of the monarchy."

Desirous of observing the manners of so singular a character, I accompanied my friend Prado into the eating-room, where ten or twelve gentlemen, to whom

we paid the usual salutation, were already assembled; and, as soon as the supper was served up, placed ourselves next to each other at the table. Considering the place we were in, I was not surprised, on examining the company, to find it a very motley group. A diminutive figure, of rather an unconciliating countenance, and whose person was extremely ridiculous and grotesque, first attracted my attention, and I immediately concluded that this must be Don Gaspard de Messagna; but the moment he opened his mouth to speak, all doubt was immediately converted into absolute certainty.

"Gentlemen," said he, interrupting the subject of conversation, "I fancy you will not be sorry to know what I heard this morning at the King's levee. A nobleman of the first distinction, and a near relation of mine, and my very intimate friend, addressed me with an air of secrecy, saying, 'Cousin, I am happy to meet you here, as it affords me opportunity to inform you of some news which is not yet made public:' and drawing me aside, whispered in my ear, 'Ossuna is recalled from the government of Naples; he has received orders to repair instantly to Madrid, to answer certain high misdemeanours which are imputed to him; he is accused of having misapplied the public money, and of having committed various other crimes, the least of which is sufficient to disgrace and ruin him, if he cannot, which I very much doubt, clear himself with honour.' This is the information, word for word, which my noble friend communicated to me, and I confess that I am of his opinion. I apprehend the loss of his employments will not be his only punishment; for he has perpetrated crimes which will well warrant such an inquiry here as may send

him to his account hereafter. If he should be impeached, I will not answer for his life."

Why I could not hear the Duke of Ossuna's conduct arraigned in these terms without feeling my mind inflamed with indignation, is to me inexplicable; for, considering what had passed between us at Palermo, I had so little reason to love him, that I might, perhaps, have been excused in feeling a certain degree of hatred. But, as if it were the privilege of great men to be always dear to those who have once been in their service, whatever cause of discontent they may have given, I could not avoid warmly undertaking his defence.

"Restrain, sir," said I, interrupting Messagna hastily, "these licentious imputations. This noble lord is the greatest character of the age. Let those only who know him speak of his conduct. Ask the Sicilians, over whom he presided before he went to Naples, what opinion they entertain of him; and they will unanimously tell you that they wish for his return."

Don Gaspard, at these words, turning to me with a haughty and contemptuous look, replied, "I did not expect to find at this table any man who would dare to defend the Viceroy's conduct. You are apparently one of those private friends whom he kept in pay to resound his heroic deeds."

"You, sir," replied I, "require no inducement to calumniate him."

"Whoever you are," replied the Hidalgo, "you are very bold in daring to contradict me."

"You are much bolder," replied I, "to arraign, in such terms, the conduct of a Viceroy, whose high station the poor owner of a paltry cottage ought to respect."

"Insolent fellow," cried Don Gaspard in a bullying manner, "if the respect I entertain for this company did not restrain me, I would instantly teach you the danger of trifling with a man of my quality."

"How! you teach me!" exclaimed I, rising in fury from my chair, "I defy your threats; come out immediately if you dare."

Messagna disposed himself to accept my challenge, and attempted to leave the room; but the whole company interested themselves in the quarrel, and forced us to resume our seats.

The courage I exhibited at Madrid will, perhaps, appear astonishing, after what I have already confessed respecting my conduct at Florence, in my adventure with Matadori. But, to tell the whole truth, exclusive of having, on the present occasion, the support of an officer in the German guard, I conjectured that Don Gaspard was not more brave than myself. I had some knowledge of the characteristics of cowardice, and I observed, by the countenance of Don Gaspard, that he was afraid of me.

Reseated at the table, we affected to dart looks of unextinguished rage at each other, like two combatants who have been reluctantly separated and only wait for an opportunity to renew the fight. When the company rose from their seats to retire to repose, Don Gaspard, on quitting the room, shook his fist at me with a fierce and menacing look, which I returned in the same way; and some of the gentlemen, conceiving from this circumstance that it was my intention to follow him, thought proper, in order to prevent future danger, to accompany him home; while Don Ramirez, under the same idea, refused to quit me until I retired to bed.

Fame is frequently acquired by actions of an equivocal nature, and Prado, as well as the rest of the company, conceived from my conduct in this affair the highest opinion of my spirit and courage; but it is not extraordinary that they should be deceived, for I began myself to think that I was become brave, and did not detect my error until, having been in bed for several hours, I found that my agitation deprived me of my rest. "What an idiot must I be," said I, "so warmly to espouse the cause of a man I have so little reason to love! I may have occasion to repent of my rashness. Don Gaspard is, perhaps, not so tame an animal as I have fancied him. What certainty have I that he has not, at this moment, resolved to send me a challenge? Alas! if I knew it to be his intention, I would rise, and, as I have not parted with my whole equipage," for I had happily a good mule still remaining, "instantly quit Madrid."

After I had passed a night of torment and inquietude, my friend Prado, early in the morning, entered my apartment and dispelled my fears, by informing me of a fact from which I derived a higher degree of joy than I thought it prudent to reveal.

"Don Gaspard," said he, "regardless of all opinion on the motive of his departure, returned to his cottage this morning at break of day. You must confess there are great cowards in the world. Alarmed by the specimen of spirit you exhibited last night, he has, thank Heaven, sneaked suddenly away to his cottage."

Ramirez, as he uttered these words, burst into a violent fit of laughter, which, no doubt, would have been redoubled at my expense, had he known that the flight of my enemy was the only measure that could have prevented my own; a fact which my

vanity carefully prevented him from discovering ; on the contrary, I affected to join with him in laughing at my antagonist ; but, to tell the truth, it was a forced convulsion, for I could not in conscience throw the shaft of ridicule at Don Gaspard without feeling it recoil upon myself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VANILLO, IN GOING TO THE KING'S LEVEE, MEETS HIS FORMER MASTER, DON HENRY OF BOLOGNA, WHO TAKES HIM TO HIS HOUSE, AND SHOWS HIM A NEW KIND OF REGISTER.

DON RAMIREZ, being obliged to mount guard the whole morning, left the hotel to discharge his duty, and I quitted it shortly afterwards, with an intention to feast my eyes with the pleasure of observing the splendid concourse of grandees who daily attend the royal levee. Being neatly dressed, I may venture to assert that I ran no risk of those *quizzings* which, in these resorts, awkward and unfashionable figures are fated to endure.

Just as I was entering the palace, a gentleman of whom I had some recollection met me; and, on further view, I recognised Don Henry of Bologna, my late master. There are certain persons out of place who cannot meet those in whose service they were employed without shame and remorse; but I was so far from resembling this crew, that I advanced boldly towards Don Henry and saluted him with an easy but respectful air. Altered as I was in my dress, in my manners, and in my person, he immediately recollected me, and addressing me with a smile, "Vanillo," cried he, "how long have you been at Madrid?"

"I arrived yesterday," said I; "you perhaps imagined that I was still in the service of the Duke of Ossuna."

"No," replied he; "when you quitted Sicily, my friend Quivillo wrote me an account of the circumstances which occasioned your dismissal; but either appearances are very deceitful, or you are now in a prosperous situation."

"Appearances do not deceive you at present," replied I. "The stream of my fortunes has never before flowed to so high a mark; thanks to my late uncle, the surgeon of Murcia, who, by his last will, has kindly enabled me to support the character of a master the rest of my days."

The behaviour of Don Henry immediately changed on discovering that I was a gentleman; and, addressing me with great affability and politeness, he assured me that the intelligence of my good fortune overwhelmed him with joy. "I sincerely congratulate you," said he, "on so happy a change of circumstances; but what affords me a still greater pleasure than even your uncle's liberality, is that you appear not to have lost that delightful hilarity with which nature has so happily endowed you. But, my dear Vanillo," continued he, in the most affectionate manner, "this place is unfavourable to the gratification I wish to indulge in conversing with you; come to my house. Will it be agreeable to you to dine with me to-day?"

The regard I felt for Don Henry rendered me too sensible of the honour he offered me to refuse his invitation; and accordingly, stepping into his carriage, which was in waiting for him, we drove immediately to his house. On entering the room, "Come, Gonzales," said he, "let us banish ceremony. You are no longer my domestic, nor have I now any authority over you. Let us forget the past, and

live in future upon terms of friendly familiarity with each other."

"Why, sir, forget?" replied I; "I should be ungrateful not to remember the past, while you thus generously wish it to be forgotten. My situation, while I was with you, was extremely happy."

"Was it possible for me to make it otherwise?" said he; "you served me with fidelity and affection. But come, my friend," continued he, "I shall no longer attend to any of the rights of my past superiority, except that I shall use the same style of familiarity by the privilege of friendship, as I formerly did from our then relative situation."

Such was the kind of conversation which passed between us before dinner was announced; and during our repast, Don Henry obliged me, by a thousand questions upon the subject of my situation in Sicily, to give him a circumstantial detail of all transactions during my residence in Italy; which I did, contrary to my usual custom, without any violation of truth. Speaking of Quivillo, I enlarged upon his merits with sentimental eloquence. "I can never forget," said I with emotion, "the grief he felt when I took leave of him. He was really afflicted at my departure; while the perfidious Thomas, the Viceroy's confidential valet, although he affected to overwhelm me with caresses and demonstrations of affection, felt, as I clearly discovered, a secret joy at my disgrace. I can therefore assure you, that I have erased and blotted this traitor from my register of friendship."

At the word "register," Don Henry burst into laughter, exclaiming, "So then, Vanillo, you have not, I perceive, forgot the register."

"It is continually recurring to my mind," said I,

"and has frequently prevented me from becoming the dupe of pretended friends."

"With a view to the same effects," said Don Henry, "I have since then procured another preservative. When I first showed you my volume, you advised me, if you recollect, to put the fidelity of my female acquaintances to a similar test, and I have followed your advice."

"I am delighted, sir," replied I; "this may be truly called writing for the public benefit, and labouring for the welfare of society. I hope you have no objection to show it to your friends, if I may be permitted to rank myself among the number."

Don Henry smiled at my familiarity, and rising from the table, conducted me into his study, where, taking down a volume of the same form but of a lesser size than the former, he put it into my hands, saying, "There is a catalogue, from the first to the last, of those beauties who have enslaved my heart. You will infer from the numbers of them that I began at a very early period of life to devote myself to the service of the sex; and true it is, that before I had attained the age of puberty, I had made more than one sacrifice on the altar of love."

On opening the volume, I perceived the name of Donna Clara de Cespedez, written in large characters in the frontispiece. "This lady, sir," said I, "appears to have been the first disturber of your heart."

"Yes," replied he, "she was the object of my first love. Scarcely had I attained fifteen years of age when I became acquainted with Donna Clara, who was nearly of the same age. Our parents being neighbours and intimate friends, I had free access every day to the house, and we enjoyed each other's

company without ceremony or reserve. We were considered as children, over whose actions it was not necessary to watch; but our conduct very soon began to require attention. Nature had already enabled us to feel the pleasures of love, and love soon taught us to express the feelings of the heart; but scarcely had Donna Clara learned the language of lovers than the capricious girl employed it in favour of a rival; a circumstance which clearly evinces that there is a germ of inconstancy and infidelity implanted in female minds, which sooner or later sprouts forth."

"Donna Clara, then," said I, "was the first female who deceived you. But let us pass to the next." I accordingly turned over the leaf of this curious register, where the name "Stella, surnamed Boquette," struck my eye.

"Stella," said Don Henry, "was the object of my second attachment. A majestic deportment, a fine shape, eyes brighter than the stars, lips richer and more ruby than the budding rose, from whence she acquired the name Boquette, placed me among the number of her admirers, and induced me to make a declaration of my love. I had not only the happiness to please her, but to receive from her an avowal of her approbation. Our hearts seemed to be riveted to each other, and I made overtures of marriage to her; but on the morning of the day appointed for our nuptials, a rich citizen proposed to settle his whole fortune upon her, and she immediately accepted his hand, and left me to meditate on her inconstancy.

"Donna Eugenia Alvarado, the next lady with whom I fell in love," continued Don Henry, "repaid my tenderness with equal infidelity. I adored this

divine beauty ; her graceful figure and her lively wit enchanted me ; and as I was not in a situation, either with respect to age, person, or fortune, to be contemned, I had the pleasure to experience a favourable reception. Time increased our fondness, and we interchanged the most solemn promises of eternal fidelity to each other ; but, on the evening of the day which was fixed for the consummation of our happiness, Eugenia was carried off by a young nobleman ; and when I found that, dazzled by the superior splendour of my rival, the elopement was made with her own consent, the news was like a thunderbolt to my mind. Feeling myself thus sacrificed to the avarice of Stella and the ambition of Eugenia, and sensibly afflicted by a recollection of the perfidy I had before experienced, I determined to guard my heart in future against the intrusion of love. I enjoyed a period of six months, without feeling even a temptation to violate my vow ; and the tranquillity which reigned in my bosom excited a degree of self-applause, or rather inspired my mind with an idea that the three successive disappointments I had experienced had seared the source of sensibility in my heart. Fatal error ! for I no sooner saw Donna Helena Pacheco, than my bosom burned with fires more ardent than those I had extinguished. In endeavouring to win the affections of my lovely Helen, I disputed the prize against twenty formidable rivals, and, sacrificing them all to me, she at length consented to make me happy. But while we were preparing to celebrate our nuptials, and Hymen was lighting his torch to lead us to the altar, my future spouse happened one night to dream that she saw me at the feet of a rival beauty ; and the fancy had fixed itself

so forcibly on her mind, that she considered it, when she awoke, as a secret warning that her approaching nuptials were inauspicious. You will, however, without doubt, expect to hear that an objection so visionary vanished with the return of reason; but, alas! neither the advice of her female friends nor my eloquence could prevent this ridiculous phantasy from interrupting our union."

I could not refrain from bursting into a fit of laughter at this trait of female superstition; and I have no doubt but I should have been equally entertained by the variety of ways in which the future mistresses of Don Henry violated their faith; but at this moment two cavaliers of his acquaintance entered the room, which obliged us to restore this register of female infidelity to its place; the writer of it not being, like some authors, disposed to publish his confessions to the world.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

*THE CHARACTERS OF THE TWO CAVALIERS, AND THE
SUBJECT OF THEIR VISIT TO DON HENRY.*

THESE gentlemen were knights of the order of St. Jacques, and such great politicians, that, fearful of expressing their sentiments in the hearing of a stranger, they took Don Henry on one side and whispered something in his ear.

Imagining from this circumstance that my company was inconvenient to them, I took my leave of my kind master, who would not suffer me to depart before I had promised to call upon him again the very first opportunity.

As I walked along the streets, I observed people clustering together in small parties, talking to each other with great emotion, in a low tone of voice and in a mysterious manner; and conjecturing from this circumstance that some extraordinary event had taken place or was impending, I inquired of my host, on arriving at my hotel, if he could inform me of the cause of this public commotion.

"It is only," replied he with great indifference, "a rumour throughout the city, which interests those who are fond of news, that the Duke of Lerma has resigned. Some are sorry for it, and others rejoice at the event; as for myself, I hope it is only a false report, for I have always heard more good than bad of this minister; but when more bad than good prevails in the report of such a character, one must stick to what one knows for fear of worse."

While the host was thus disclosing his sentiments, it occurred to me that the two cavaliers had visited Don Henry for the purpose of communicating to him this news, and of obtaining his opinion of the probable consequences of the event; and Don Ramirez, who at that instant came in from the city, confirmed the report.

Ramirez appeared so thoughtful and discontented, that I asked him what was the matter; but, instead of giving any answer, he conducted me to his apartment, and, placing himself on a chair by my side, uttered a profound sigh. "What can this mean?" exclaimed I; "you alarm me. Have you heard any disagreeable news?"

"Very disagreeable news, indeed," replied Prado; "news which shocks me extremely. I have been to the house of Don Roderigo de Calderona, where, observing his domestics in the greatest consternation, I inquired the cause of it from an old *valet-de-chambre*, who has long possessed the confidence of his master. "My friend," said I, "permit me to ask you the cause of that sorrow which I perceive upon the countenance of every person in this house; you know the interest I take in everything that concerns the master of it."

"Ah, Signor Don Ramirez," said he, in a tone which sufficiently testified the affliction he felt, "all is lost; the Duke of Lerma is no longer the pilot of the state."

"Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed I, "what is it you say! Can he possibly have lost the favour of the Prince?"

"It is but too true," replied the *valet-de-chambre*; "and what will astonish the world more than all the rest is that his disgrace has been effected by the machinations of his own son. The Duke of Uzeda,

excited by hatred and envy against his father, and contriving for a long while past to injure him in the opinion of the King, with whom Uzeda is a favourite, has at length found means to effect his purpose; for the monarch, by a letter under his own hand, has ordered the Duke to retire to such part of Spain as he shall choose, and enjoy the benefits his liberality hath bestowed. This is the cause of that consternation which you have observed, for you cannot be ignorant that the fall of Don Roderigo de Calderona must accompany that of the Duke of Lerma."

"To console the *valet-de-chambre*, and to flatter his mind with a ray of hope," continued Don Ramirez, "I said to him, My good friend, notwithstanding all you have told me, I still doubt, from the known ascendancy which the Duke has long possessed over the mind of his majesty, this story of his disgrace. The minister is replete with resources; and although the tempest may for a time howl around him, he will, I think, continue to elude its rage; perhaps, even at this moment, he is more firmly fixed than ever in the good opinion of the King."

Don Ramirez, the moment he had done speaking, sunk into a state of gloomy thought; and it was not difficult for me to divine the cause of it. "Your interests, Don Ramirez," said I, "are too dear to me to have listened to this conversation with indifference; but it does not appear from what you have said that the disgrace of the minister is yet certain. Wait until the report is confirmed before you suffer it thus to afflict your mind. Perhaps, as you suggested to the *valet-de-chambre*, your patron has already regained the good opinion of your royal master."

"I wish most sincerely that it were so," replied the

disconsolate Prado ; "not so much from a fear of losing in Calderona a friend capable of advancing me to fortune, as from a sense of gratitude for the favours he has already conferred on me."

Prado, having made this observation, changed the discourse. "Tell me, Vanillo," said he, "will you have the kindness to do me a favour for which I shall be thankful? Let us sup together this evening in my apartment; for I cannot, in the present state of my mind, receive any pleasure from public company. The Duke's disgrace, and the removal of his secretary, would probably become the subject of conversation; and I might be forced to endure expressions that would give me excessive pain."

"I commend your prudence," said I; "it is wise to keep danger at a distance; perhaps," added I, with a smile, "some new Messagna might prompt you to do more for Don Roderigo than I did for the Duke of Ossuna."

CHAPTER XXXV.

*THE IMPORTANT EVENT WHICH HAPPENED A SHORT TIME
AFTERWARDS AT COURT; THE CHANGES WHICH FOL-
LOWED; AND THE SEPARATION OF VANILLO AND
RAMIREZ.*

THE approaching dismission with which every person now conceived the Duke of Lerma was threatened, became for fifteen days the sole topic of conversation at Madrid; after which the rumour insensibly decreased; and as the minister assisted at the councils, and held audiences as usual, it was at length conceived to be without foundation.

About two months afterwards, however, Philip III., whose health had long been declining, fell sick and died; and the prince, his son, on ascending the throne, promoted Don Gaspard de Gusman, Count of Olivarez, his favourite, to the high station of prime minister of Spain. The people, always charmed by novelty, rejoiced at the change, but it was an event extremely mortifying to the adherents to the Sandoval party, as well as to those who, like Don Ramirez, espoused the interests of Don Roderigo de Calderona. As for myself, I beheld these important revolutions with perfect indifference; for as I neither gained nor lost by the event, it was of no consequence to me whether the Duke of Lerma or the Count Olivarez governed the monarchy. The only mortification I felt was, that my friend Prado, being no longer able to rely upon the power of Calderona for promotion, had lost the best string to his bow.

The new minister, from the manner in which he was spoken of, raised an expectation that he intended to establish his authority on the complete ruin of his predecessor. All persons who were in any degree obnoxious to him were displaced, and the vacancies supplied with men avowedly attached to his interests. Calderona, who was immediately stripped of all his employments and dismissed, was the first person who felt the authority of the new minister. Riches are the great sweeteners of adversity, and Calderona quietly retired to the vicinity of Valladolid, the place of his nativity, in the fond expectation that he would be permitted to enjoy the immense fortune which he had acquired by means, as it was said, not very honourable; but he had scarcely reached his retreat before he was publicly impeached of having been guilty of many high crimes and misdemeanours, and, after a long examination, condemned by the judges, to whom the commission was directed, to be publicly beheaded.

Olivarez, not contented with depriving this faithful friend to his predecessor of life, sought out every person who had been in any degree connected with the party, in order to remove them from their employments; and the research was made with such minuteness and care, that even Don Ramirez was deprived of his ensigncy, for no other reason than because it had been given to him by Calderona. Great numbers of other deserving men also experienced a similar fate; and not one of the Duke of Lerma's party was suffered to retain his place.

Prado (for disclosure of it is a justice I owe to the goodness of his heart) felt the ignominious exit of his benefactor with excruciating sensibility. Had he

been the only son of the unfortunate secretary, he could not have discovered deeper affliction: his mind indeed seemed to be affected by sentiments more powerful than those of gratitude; for, conceiving the infamy of his patron's punishment might glance upon himself, he resolved to bid adieu for ever to Madrid.

"My dear Vanillo," said he to me one day, "we must now once more part. I have determined to return to Corita, and live in the character of a private gentleman, upon the patrimonial remains which I have, thank Heaven, preserved from the wreck of youthful folly."

I endeavoured to dissuade him from his design, but his resolution was unconquerable; and, after embracing each other with all the transports of real friendship, he bade me an eternal farewell!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE NEW ACQUAINTANCE WHICH VANILLO FORMED— THE HISTORY OF DON MARCOS DE GIRAFÁ.

THE departure of Don Ramirez gave me great affliction for five or six days, for I had recorded his name in my register of friendship, and having had no reason to erase it, I could not help feeling the loss of his company and conversation. But, as sorrow was incompatible with my disposition, the uneasy sensations of my heart hourly diminished, and my mind soon resumed its natural hilarity. I must indeed confess that a new acquaintance, which I formed almost immediately after the departure of Prado, contributed very soon to remove all recollection of him from my mind. The name of my new companion was Don Marcos de Girafa, a gentleman, as he styled himself, of Asturia.

The manner in which I linked my heart to that of the Asturian's was as follows:

Not far from the royal residence there was a coffee-house, much frequented by the idlers of the metropolis, which I generally visited every day. One morning, while I was drinking my chocolate, a person with a prepossessing aspect entered the room, and, placing himself accidentally near me, we entered immediately into conversation. There was something in his character which struck me. His thoughts were just, his language correct, his elocution graceful, and his manners pleasing. He

possessed a vivacious imagination, and was rather disposed to raillery—a talent which he managed so dexterously, as never to give offence.

Sympathy of disposition immediately attached us to each other; and in a few days we were so closely united, that a mutual confidence took place. I disclosed to him all the memorable occurrences of my life; and he in return detailed his history to me in the following terms:

The History of Don Marcos de Girafa.

Don Vincent de Girafa, my father, having loyally devoted the greater part of his life and fortune to the service of his king, retired to the city of Oviedo, where he formed a matrimonial union, of which I was the sole offspring. My parents, although they were far from being rich, fondly afforded me a liberal education. I was attended by a variety of masters; and, among others, by a great proficient on the guitar; on which, as if they thought the knowledge of this instrument would in future be serviceable, my parents appeared extremely anxious that I should excel. I made considerable progress also in the art of fencing; and if you add to these qualifications a light sprinkling of the belles-lettres, you will have a tolerable idea of the extent of my erudition.

My father one day desired me to attend him in his study.

"My dear Marcos," said he, "you are now seventeen years of age, and it is time you should make choice of some profession; for I will not suppose that you are inclined to live, like a Sibarite, in indolence and luxury. I propose to send you to seek

your fortune at Court. You are not deficient in understanding, and possess, with a graceful person, the advantage of being *a gentleman*. With these strings to your bow, you cannot easily fail of success. Endeavour to obtain, if possible, the situation of page to some great man; you may, by this means, make considerable advances. I will equip you properly, and put fifty pistoles in your pocket to enable you to wait conveniently for a favourable opportunity to procure a good station. Well, my boy," continued he, "does this scheme please you?"

"Yes, sir," replied I, with an excess of joy, from which he drew the happiest presages, "I shall depart for Madrid whenever you think it proper; and my mind predicts that I shall not be long there without finding some person to whom my services may be useful."

This answer was highly pleasing to my father, who immediately provided for me a handsome suit of clothes, and put everything which he judged necessary for this expedition into a state of preparation. When the day of departure arrived, "Marcos," said he, embracing me with all the warmth of parental affection, "Marcos, my dear boy, go! and may Heaven not only conduct you safely to Madrid, but aid your virtuous endeavours. Permit me, however, to recommend to your serious attention a piece of advice which you seem to stand in great need of: Guard, my dear boy, with unwearied vigilance, against the vivacity of your temper. You are naturally of a lively turn, and must be conscious of this defect. You not only indulge in laughter yourself, but frequently excite it in others, without seeming to recollect that you are by birth a Spaniard

and a gentleman. Dismiss, therefore, this vicious habit; be always serious, always grave, whatever pleasantries you may either hear or see. Never, in short, quit that gravity which so honourably distinguishes Spaniards from all other nations."

My father, having closed this important lesson, kindly counted out fifty pistoles, which he gave to me with his benediction. I departed, with the muleteers, for Madrid, and in eight days arrived safely in the metropolis.

I proceeded to a hotel situated in the high street of Toledo, the master of which had acquired the nickname of Monillo, or the Little Monkey, for he was scarcely so tall as Sisyphus, the dwarf of Mark Antony. He possessed, however, a mind so whimsical and lively, that Spanish gravity was in great danger of forgetting itself in his company. My solemnity vanished the moment I beheld him; and when I heard him speak, his manner of expression was so humorous, that it was impossible to refrain from laughter. He was, however, notwithstanding all his oddities, very capable of giving seasonable and serviceable advice; for having informed him of the object of my journey, he drew me aside, and addressed me in the following manner:

"Young gentleman," said he, "as you have an inclination to become a page, I can perhaps afford you no inconsiderable service by introducing you to an old citizen, who, for a suitable recompense, makes it his business to recommend domestics to such places as they wish to attain."

"You will do me a great favour," replied I, "by procuring me an interview with this agent; but at present I am not in a hurry."

"I understand you," replied Monillo; "you intend first to see the world, and to lighten your pockets of a few pistoles; but take good care, my young man, there are certain *hawks* in the city of Madrid, always hovering, and ready to pounce upon a new-flown pigeon." And, indeed, the very first time I walked on the Prado, I met a young minx, accompanied by an elderly woman, who leered at me with so inviting an eye, that I could not refrain from joining them company; and, to make bad worse, they cajoled me so successfully, that I was obliged, a few days afterwards, to implore Monillo immediately to introduce me to the old citizen he had before mentioned to me.

We proceeded to the house of his friend, where we were obliged to wait until he had given successive audiences to two young men, with whom he was previously engaged. On their being dismissed, we were introduced.

"Signor Cortes," said Monillo, "permit me to introduce to you a young gentleman, the only son of the most ancient family of Asturia. The muleteer who conducted him from Oviedo to Madrid gave me this information, and this is, you know, hearing facts from the voice of truth. He is not one of those miserable young noblemen who, being unable to subsist on their poor domains, esteem it a happiness to hold a place in some family just risen into day. He is a real gentleman, whose father has sent him to the Court to study polite life—to unite himself to some character of high distinction—and to find a patron whose interests may advance him in the world."

"Signor Monillo," replied the old citizen, "it is

a sufficient recommendation of this young gentleman that you interest yourself in his behalf. I will render him every service in my power. I know what will suit him, and am at this moment enabled to place him in the situation he wishes to obtain. The Marquis of Astorga, who is without doubt a man of the highest quality, is now in want of a page. Should you like this place?" continued he, addressing himself to me.

"Extremely well," replied I. "You have only to say in how much I am indebted to you for this favour."

"Oh! only a trifle," replied Cortes. "The situation of a page is not very lucrative; and, therefore, exclusive of the circumstance of your being recommended to me by my friend Monillo, it would be unconscionable to make you pay much. Two doubloons will be sufficient. But this is not the price," continued he, "to officers who have great salaries and numerous perquisites. For example—you observed, perhaps, the two gentlemen who went away; the tallest of them is a maitre-d'hotel out of place, and I have procured him a salary of a thousand crowns a year, in the house of a noble duke, who is celebrated for his hospitality. The other I have appointed steward to a large estate, which is deeply encumbered with debt."

"And how much," said Monillo, "did you draw from the purses of these gentlemen?"

"It cost the maitre-d'hotel," replied the citizen, "two thousand crowns, and the steward a thousand pistoles."

"By St. Matthew," exclaimed the dwarf, "this is serving a friend gratuitously. Your conduct to them

is very different from that which they will observe toward their masters."

Confiding in the promises of this old place-broker, that he would the ensuing morning enrol me among the pages of the Marquis of Astorga, I released two doubloons, which were nearly the whole of my funds, and, putting them into his hand, returned to the hotel with my host, who as we walked along said, "You will do marvellously well at the house of the Marquis. I have frequently heard this nobleman spoken of as a most amiable character."

"It is to you, Signor Monillo," said I, "that I shall be indebted; and I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kindness."

The ensuing day I waited on my old friend at the hour appointed, and he immediately conducted me to the mansion of my intended master, where the splendour and magnificence which shone on every side struck me with astonishment. His house resembled rather the palace of a king than the dwelling of a subject.

My conductor carried me directly to the apartment of the major-domo, and whispered something in his ear; but whatever it was, the major, as he leaned his ear towards the speaker, looked at me from time to time in a way which made me fancy that he was not dissatisfied with my appearance; and when the old citizen had finished his whisper, I was confirmed in this opinion, for the major-domo instantly addressed me in these words :

"Young man, from the excellent recommendation which Signor Cortes has given me of you, I shall, as soon as you can be provided with a proper livery, receive you into the number of my domestic pages;

but from this day you will live in this mansion scot-free."

By these means I was engaged to perform the honourable part of a page; but it is one of the pleasing advantages of this station that the yoke of servitude is scarcely felt, and the moment I was apparelled in the livery of my lord I conceived myself of great importance, adopted the sentiments of my brethren, and became disdainful of the humble honour of cup-bearing.

The intoxication which sometimes seizes vulgar minds upon the sudden acquisition of high rank cannot be surprising, since the place even of page could inspire a gentleman with pride. The Marquis, it is true, was of so kind and accommodating a disposition, and took so much pains to soften the rigour of their servile condition by his conciliating manners, that his domestics of every description seemed to serve him less from duty than inclination. Instead of punishing their faults, he contrived excuses in their defence.

One day the father of a family of low condition complained to the Marquis that his secretary had seduced his daughter, and demanded to have justice done. "But what," replied the Marquis, "would you have me do in this affair? My secretary is a Frenchman, and you know that Frenchmen are by nature addicted to gallantry, and accustomed to seduce women. We must excuse it in them; but if my porter, who is a German, and addicted to wine, had committed the crime of which you accuse my secretary, I would have had him hanged." In short, the Marquis of Astorga was not one of those characters who are every moment at variance with

themselves, and with whom it is necessary to watch the return of temper to obtain their kindness. Exempt from caprice, and uniform in his conduct, all persons who solicited his patronage were received with politeness, and assured of his interest in the warmest and most affectionate terms ; but, in truth, the moment they were gone he forgot all that had passed, and never recollects his promise until he saw them again. I was myself deceived by his specious manners. A person who was desirous of a place in the office of the minister offered me a hundred pistoles to procure it for him through the interest of the Marquis. I undertook the business, and confidently solicited my master to recommend the man I named.

"I shall do it with pleasure, my young friend," replied the Marquis with an obliging voice. "I am happy to find you sensible of my inclination to serve you. You may assure your friend that he shall immediately be appointed to the place. I will make a point of it with the minister."

Fearful of being considered importunate, I permitted more than a month to elapse before I renewed my application, contenting myself with officiously appearing at least ten times a day in the presence of the Marquis, under an idea that my disappointed countenance and extraordinary assiduities would refresh his memory ; but as he did not give me the most distant hint on the subject, and time run rapidly away, I seized an opportunity to introduce to him the person I was so deeply interested to serve, in hope that this interview would produce the desired effect.

"Sir," said I, "this is the gentleman for whom

you kindly promised to procure a place under government."

At these words the Marquis, as if he had recollected a dream effaced by time from his memory, said with well-affected surprise, that I had recalled to his mind the remembrance of a promise which he had forgot, but that he would make ample reparation by speaking on the subject to the Duke of Lerma, or Don Roderigo de Calderona, who at that time held the reins of administration.

This new promise gave me new hopes, and I waited patiently another month in daily expectation of success; but at length perceiving that I was no farther advanced than I was the first day, I became disgusted with the dilatory and deceitful character of the Marquis, and resolved to attach myself to some other master, upon whose promise I might more confidently rely.

I accordingly communicated my intention to the old place-broker, who, for two more doubloons, procured me a situation with the Count de Orgas, a nobleman who, he assured me, was reputed to be the slave of sincerity, and extremely fond of making every one happy; "but," added he, "it is my duty at the same time to inform you that he is a character of rather a singular kind. His disposition is so quick, blunt, and hasty, that those who solicit his interest are, in general, not very pleasantly received. He destroys at the first interview every hope of obtaining the desired object, but he ultimately endeavours to perform the services required. The manner in which he confers favours is extremely ungracious."

"What does it matter?" interrupted I; "he does confer them, and is on that account a much more

valuable character than the Marquis of Astorga, who promises everything to everybody, but performs nothing to any."

A few days after I had changed my situation, I observed, indeed, that my new master was a very extraordinary character, and directly the reverse of that of the Marquis of Astorga. The Marquis never complained of the conduct of his servants; whether they performed their duties ill or well, he always appeared satisfied; but the Count, on the contrary, reproved his whenever they really deserved it, and sometimes addressed them in terms of great severity. When any person humbly implored his protection, and solicited his interest with the king, he immediately flew into a violent passion with the suppliant, reviled him in the strongest terms, positively refused him any assistance, and then did all in his power to serve him.

I shall never, continued Don Marcos, forget a scene at which I was present. A woman, dressed in mourning, waited on the Count. "Sir," said she, on being introduced to him, "as I know your excellency is extremely charitable, I have ventured to hope that my misery may touch your heart. I am the widow of an officer in the Spanish guards, who has left me with four children, and little or nothing to support them. If you would be kind enough to solicit his majesty to grant me a small pension to enable me to"—

The Count did not give her time to finish the sentence, but interrupting her with great impetuosity—"Solicit, ay, solicit," said he in a blunt tone; "you think it is only necessary to solicit such pensions of the king to have them granted. Do you

think he is thus prodigal of his favours? No, no, truly; there are other objects than such as you are to recompense. If he were to grant pensions to every person in his service, his whole revenues would not be sufficient."

The afflicted widow attempted to reply. But the Count again interrupted her, saying with warmth, "Retire, madam; I will not interfere on this occasion. I will not engage in such unwarrantable solicitations."

During this interview he finished dressing, and immediately entering his coach, drove to the king's levee, leaving the widow equally dejected and astonished at the unfavourable reception she had met with.

The widow, however, not easily repulsed, or perhaps informed by some friend of the Count's character, followed him to the palace, in the hope of being able to procure another interview, and to renew her suit with more success. Waiting patiently for three hours at the palace gate, through which he was obliged to pass on his return home, she approached him just as he was stepping into his coach.

"Oh! sir," she cried, "take pity on my poor children!"

"Woman," replied he gruffly, "go home, go home; I have spoken to his majesty, and he has granted you an annuity of one hundred pistoles."

The Count de Orgas, in short, was an amiable brute, and the most generous nobleman in the kingdom.

Among other good qualities, he possessed one which is extremely rare. He never failed, after a certain number of years, to reward the fidelity of his servants; and as he had conceived an affection for me, I should, without doubt, have made my fortune in proper time, if I had not unfortunately quarrelled

with one of his gentlemen respecting a young female who waited on the Countess. Each of us loved the beauteous maid without being conscious we were rivals, and I do not know which of us was the most favoured lover; for she conducted herself so dexterously, that we each of us flattered ourselves with being the sole object of her choice. But however dexterously an amorous intrigue may for a certain time be carried on, it will be discovered at last. My rival learnt, I cannot tell by what means, that the sound of my guitar was heard every evening, and that I was endeavouring to captivate the affection of Donna Innes. Upon this information he immediately sent me a challenge; and I flew instantly to the appointed spot, where I found my adversary waiting to receive me. We had already drawn our swords, and put ourselves into a posture of defence, when my gentleman, suddenly dropping all his fury, said, "Listen to me, sir; a momentary reflection, which I think it necessary to communicate to you before we proceed, has stopped my arm. What is it we are about to do? By destroying our lives we destroy the reputation of Donna Innes. Is this proceeding like Spaniards? The honour of a mistress, however faithless, ought to be preserved. But why faithless? for I have no proof of Donna Innes's infidelity. Ought I, upon slight suspicion, to indulge a jealous fury?"

"No," replied I, "it is unjust; and if you will admit that you have been too hasty, it will be my wish that all hostility should cease. I have not so great a desire to quarrel with you as to be deaf to the voice of reason on the subject; and it is sufficient for me, that in thus readily appearing to your chal-

lenge, I have convinced you that I am not a man whose courage is to be contemned."

My rival, assuming at these words the most friendly aspect, exclaimed, while he embraced me, "Don Marcos, let us forget what has passed. Permit me to hope for the continuance of your friendship, while I afford you mine."

Thus were two fierce antagonists, mutually eager to cut each other's throats, reconciled; but as the cause of the quarrel still existed, war was every moment in danger of breaking out between them. The Count de Orgas, however, soon set all matters right. A *valet-de-chambre*, one of those prying creatures who hears and sees everything that stirs in a house, and who had conceived antipathies against both of us, seized the first favourable opportunity to inform the Count, not only of our quarrel, but of the cause which had given birth to it; and the Count, who was by nature rigid and severe, turned us both instantly out of doors, as common disturbers of his domestic tranquillity.

I returned to the hotel of my good friend Monillo, whose interest with the major-domo of the Duke of Pegnaranda was sufficient to procure me the situation of page to that nobleman. The Duke was between sixty and seventy years of age, and possessed all that tender and benign disposition which distinguished the character of the Marquis of Astorga, without the defect of forgetting his promises. But although he was free from this defect, he was under the dominion of a folly which rendered him ridiculous in the eye of the world. Addicted to gallantry from his youth, the habits of it still accompanied his old age. Fondly devoted to a coquette,

whom he made the idol of his soul, he passed whole days in conversing with her, admiring extravagantly every word she uttered, and sometimes extolling whatever was most defective in her person. He resembled Balbinus in Horace, who praised even the wart which disfigured the nose of his mistress.

An idolater of this description was, as will be easily conceived, not well rewarded for all the flatteries he bestowed. The lady disposed of the complaisance of listening to his adulations extremely dear; and, exclusive of the prodigious expense he lavished on her, she was far from being scrupulously faithful to him. A rumour prevailed that he had more than one rival, and the report was not without foundation. But it gained no credit in the mind of my doating master, who, piquing himself upon making love upon the principles of knight-errantry, would have thought it criminal to suspect the virtue of his mistress; an excellent lesson to those lovers who, upon appearances, frequently false, become the prey of a tormenting jealousy.

The Duke, at the time I was received into his service, doated to excess on his fair favourite. It was not long before I gained his confidence. "Page," said he to me the first day, "your countenance pleases me, and I have made choice of you to execute a secret and confidential service." At the same time he gave me a letter to carry to his nymph, whose name was Hortensia, and who lived in the vicinity of the Duke's mansion. I presented my billet to the lady with a graceful air, and acquitted myself in this honourable employment with as much dexterity as those who are more in practice.

The lady, never having seen me before, looked at

me for some time with particular attention ; then opened the letter ; and I felt, or affected to feel, while she was reading it, an ecstasy of pleasure. She resembled the tender Florisbel perusing a billet from her dear Don Belianis. Soft sighs escaped from her lips, and once or twice she seemed to faint away with ecstasy of delight. So well, indeed, did she act her part, that if I had not received my cue from Monillo, I should really have fancied her to be foolishly fond of my master.

Having performed this character, she assumed another. "Are you the Duke of Pegnaranda's page?" said she. "Let me congratulate you on your situation ; you cannot, my young friend, serve a more amiable nobleman."

"Madam," replied I, "although I have scarcely held this honourable post for twenty-four hours, I have had more than one occasion to rejoice at my appointment. The Duke has convinced me that I have the felicity to please him ; and I trust he will have no reason to change the opinion he entertains in my favour. All my endeavours shall be exerted, madam, to preserve his approbation, and to render myself worthy of your protection."

"My protection is granted to you from this moment," replied Hortensia ; "you appear to deserve it. Go," added she, "and be assured of my influence with the Duke in your favour. It shall not be my fault if you do not make your fortune in his service."

Although I conceived that these promises were made to induce me to espouse her interests with the Duke, I feigned to attribute them entirely to her goodness ; and, offering her repeated thanks, returned home, where the Duke was waiting my arrival.

"Well, page," said he, "you have now seen Hortensia; what is your opinion of that divine creature? Does she not truly justify all the tenderness I entertain for her?"

"My lord," replied I, not ignorant of the sort of tale which would flatter him, "Donna Hortensia appears to be all perfection, and highly deserving of your attachment. But, charming as she is, you ought to be less delighted with her beauty than with the ardency of her affection. While she read your letter, I observed, notwithstanding all her caution, that her heart overflowed with delight. The tenderest sighs, the warmest transports, and the softest languor discovered the affection of her soul."

A narration so extravagant must have offended every mind but that of this doating lover, whose credulity was so insatiable, that I was in no danger of disgusting him.

"The discovery you made," cried he, "transports me. You see with what injustice Hortensia is accused by those who would impeach the sincerity of her affection."

"Oh! certainly, sir," replied I; "I can rely on my own eyes; and after what I have seen, there is no doubt of your being tenderly beloved."

"I believe it," replied the Duke; "and being as certain of possessing her heart as I am conscious that she possesses mine, I shall continue to enjoy the pleasures of this happy intercourse without being disturbed by the babblings of evil fame."

"This," replied I, "is the sure way to avoid the miseries of love. You act wisely by relying thus implicitly on the fidelity of Hortensia."

"I should injure her by doubting it," replied he;

"Hortensia possesses an elevated soul and the most exalted sentiments. The dreams of sleep even offer nothing but the noblest images to her mind. I visited her, for example, yesterday evening, and found her asleep. Approaching softly towards the couch, without waking her, I stood for some time in silent admiration of her charms. I am ignorant of the subject which occupied her mind; but, in dreaming, she twice pronounced the word *page*. Accomplished woman! there is not another of the sex who would not have used the vulgar term of *lackey*; but the divine Hortensia, whose mind is constantly filled with sublime ideas, used the appellation *page*."

I could scarcely refrain from laughing aloud at my employer while he uttered these words, but fortunately I had power to resist it. I even applauded the extravagant idea of this doating lover, and flattered his passions by telling him that he was, without doubt, the interesting subject of her dream.

"You are right," replied he, with a vain and half-witted smile, "for Hortensia told me confidentially what it was."

Two days subsequent to this conversation, I was again despatched to the residence of Hortensia with another epistle, which she read with the same demonstrations of joy as upon the former occasion. During this interview, she asked me a thousand questions respecting the place of my birth, and the condition of my family. Having satisfied her curiosity on these subjects, she inquired into the cause which induced me to leave my home, and from what motives I had come from Madrid. I told her my only view was to seek the protection of some great man, by attaching myself to his interests.

"I am extremely happy, then," replied she, "that chance has thrown you into the service of the Duke of Pegnaranda. I may be able to render you many good offices with him. I have indeed already disposed his mind in your favour; and it will not be long before you perceive the good effects of my interposition."

On receiving these assurances, I expressed my thanks in terms which discovered, on my part, the grateful sensibility of my heart; and the kind discourse she had held with me seemed to reveal something significant on hers; my vanity, at least, made me so imagine; and the next time I was sent to her house, I was made acquainted with the cause of it.

Hortensia, on that day, did not think proper to grant me an audience. Celia, her old female servant, and the depositary of her secrets, received me, saying, "If you have any letter for my mistress, she desires you will deliver it to me. I shall give it to her after she has had a little repose, for she is at present indisposed with a headache which torments her incessantly. O fatal love, how often have I cursed thee!"

"What do you say, Celia?" exclaimed I, with astonishment. "Why this imprecation? Can my master have given uneasiness to your mistress?—to this divine idol of his soul? Has he, by any momentary fit of jealousy, troubled"—

"Shameful thought," interrupted Celia; "his Grace is too fond a lover to permit the smallest trait of jealousy to escape him. No, no, that is not the cause of her indisposition; but," added she, with an air of concealment, "I am silent. If, indeed, your beard were a little older, I might perhaps say more to you."

"Oh ! Madam Celia," interrupted. I in my turn, "you reproach my youth; but let me tell you that I am capable of keeping a secret, however important it may be. I have learnt discretion, although I am only a page. Try me, if you have any doubt."

"I have a great mind," replied Celia, "to tell it to you ; and if I should, you will hear something that will surprise you very much. My mistress, since her last conversation with you, has done nothing but dream, and sigh, and groan, and talk of you. Guess what this means."

"I will tell you," replied I, "what this means. You and your mistress are willing to entertain yourselves at my expense, by inducing me to believe that she has not disdained to regard me with affection, and that I have, in short, made a tender impression on her heart; and you are now curious to learn whether I am simpleton enough to believe it. Confess the truth, Celia. Do not you contrive this rare scheme as a means of pleasing the Duke, and affording all three of you an occasion to laugh at me ? I have not, it is true, had much experience, but I clearly perceive this is a snare which you have laid to entrap my mind rather than my heart."

"I am glad to find," replied the old woman, "that you are not sufficiently presumptuous to think otherwise. Young men in general are not quite so modest, and many in your situation would have entertained so good an opinion of themselves, as to have thought differently on such an occasion. But," added she, "I may perhaps be mistaken; it may not be from modesty that you are thus incredulous of her love. Come, be candid and sincere. You think there are no allurements in the conquest you have made ?"

"Oh! pardon me!" exclaimed I; "of all the women I ever saw, she is the woman to whom I could be most fondly attached."

"Are you really serious, young man?" cried Celia with emotion; "speak sincerely. Does my mistress please you?"

"I should adore her," replied I with transport, "and become even a greater fool to her than my master."

Celia, on hearing these words, began to dance for joy; and gently tapping me on the shoulder, said, "Ah! go, you young rogue; you are happier than a greater man. Go, and return here to-morrow precisely at the same hour. Donna Hortensia," added she, "will then no longer be troubled with the headache, and you shall have with her a decisive interview."

Although this promise appeared clear and satisfactory, yet I did not dare entirely to abandon myself to those flattering hopes which began to arise in my mind. Fearful that it might be some artful contrivance between the mistress and the maid to sport with my feelings, and that the adventure might terminate to the confusion of the page,—for I could not conceive that a lady who was thus adored by a nobleman of high distinction, would condescend to fix her affections upon me,—I returned home fatigued by conflicting reflections, and the ensuing day returned to the residence of Hortensia, my mind replete with jealousy and my heart with love.

I have no doubt, continued Don Marcos, that you are curious to know the particulars of the decisive interview which I was promised, and which I actually had with Hortensia. I shall relate them.

The lady, when I entered her apartment, lay reclin-

ing on a sofa, dressed in a loose robe, elegantly adorned, and looked so charming, that if the matter had not been already settled, I should certainly have fallen in love with her.

"Madam," said I, as I approached the sofa, "I surrender myself a willing victim of your pleasantry; for, by making me believe that I am the object of your affection, I must suppose that you and Celia have combined to entertain yourselves at my expense; but I am not a dupe to the conceit, for I know myself too well to flatter my mind with the hope of happiness so"—

"Listen to me, Don Marcos," interrupted Hortensia seriously. "You have deceived yourself: there is no contrivance in this business, nor shall any be used by me. Speak candidly, therefore,—do you love me?"

A question of this kind, put so directly, rather surprised me.

"Madam," replied I, "what mortal can defend his heart against so many charms? One benign look from you is sufficient to"—

"Answer precisely the question I have asked you," interrupted Hortensia with great precipitation; "answer it without subterfuge or equivocation. Do you entertain an affection for me?"

"An affection for you, madam!" exclaimed I with transport; "yes, at the hazard of whatever may follow. Vouch for me, O truth! that the heart of mortal never felt a purer flame. To join my fate to yours will render me the happiest of human beings. Pardon, divine Hortensia, the rash declaration which has escaped my lips; and yet how shall I otherwise answer the question you propounded?"

"Your answer satisfies me," replied Hortensia; "and to be equally candid, listen while I disclose the sentiments of my mind. The first moment I beheld you, I felt the impression you have made on my heart; and since that moment my inclination in your favour has so rapidly increased, that I resolved to offer you, with my hand, a fortune, in gold and jewels, of thirty thousand pistoles. Let us retire with this fortune from Madrid to any place in the country that you shall make choice of, and there pass the remainder of our lives in a delightful union; a union which will be the more permanent as it will not be repugnant to the divine will."

I fancy, Signor Gonzales, continued Don Marcos, that you would have been, as I certainly was, dazzled by this splendid proposal. It had, however, two aspects, which were not equally pleasing to my view. The charms of Hortensia, and the magnitude of her fortune, afforded a delightful prospect to an indigent page; but the idea which accompanied it, that I should be obliged to marry a woman of doubtful reputation, presented a pill extremely bitter to the palate of a gentleman. What opinion, said I to myself, will the world entertain of me? My father and my grandfather, preferring honour to wealth, chose wives of the chonest characters; but I, degenerating from their delicacy, am about to dishonour their names by a disgraceful connection. The pride of family whispered thus sternly in my ear, and I listened to its dictates for several moments; but that being all I was enabled to do for the honour of my ancestors, I accepted Hortensia's proposal with every imaginable demonstration of gratitude and love.

"Charming Hortensia!" exclaimed I, throwing myself at her feet, "may I then really hope that you will condescend to join your destiny with mine? No happiness can equal that which you confer on me."

While I spoke these words I kissed with soft transport her fair hands, and perceived by her looks that, in granting me this favour, she partook of the pleasure she bestowed. A conversation of the tenderest kind ensued, in which we endeavoured to make choice of the place to which we should retire. I proposed the Asturias.

"Come, my Hortensia," said I to her, "let us, if it please you, reside with my father at his chateau, near Oviedo, between Pegnaflor and Manserret; the situation is delightful, and nothing shall be wanting, either on the part of Don Vincent or myself, to make you happy."

"Every place," replied Hortensia, "where you are will always be the most delightful to me. Let us not delay our felicity. Write immediately to your father, and solicit his consent to our union; for his consent must precede the execution of our design."

"I cannot avoid trembling for your situation at this period," said I, interrupting Don Marcos. "Don Vincent, I apprehend, refused his consent to this marriage; for Hidalgos are extremely nice upon the subject of family alliances, and scrutinise closely into every circumstance."

"The observation," replied Don Marcos, "is, in general, very true; but my father is as avaricious as he is poor, and upon these circumstances I relied for his consent, which, as the connection appeared so advantageous both to himself and to me, he granted

without hesitation. Besides, examples were not wanting of many noblemen who, to readorn a castle tottering to its fall, had united themselves, without much compunction, to persons of an inferior degree; riches having at all times proved the best props of indigent nobility. Blinded, in short, by the brilliancy of the thirty thousand pistoles, he listened to self-interest alone, and instantly exhorted me not to let slip so fine an opportunity of rendering myself independent. Preparations, therefore, were immediately made to consummate a hymeneal equally desired by all parties, and we were shortly afterwards privately married."

"But what said the Duke de Pegnaranda to all this?" cried I; "I long to hear it."

"You shall be informed directly," replied Girafa, "and it certainly forms the most curious trait of this transaction. Infatuated with the idea that Hortensia loved him to distraction, although he was only her lover *ad honores*, the old dotard lived tranquil and contentedly for some time under this agreeable delusion—a delusion which both Hortensia and I endeavoured to support until we were prepared to leave Madrid; when, in order to preserve the interests of a nobleman of his importance, my wife, on the eve of our departure, wrote to him in the following terms:—

" ' MY LORD DUKE,—We must now part for ever. A dream, which I regard as a secret warning from Heaven, has induced me to retire from the world. I intend to bury myself in a retreat sacred to penitence, and must bid you an eternal adieu.'

" ' HORTENSIA.' "

This letter I delivered, in my character of page, into the Duke's hands.

"Is it possible," said he, on reading it, "that a dream can make so lively an impression?"

"Yes, sir, upon a female mind," replied I; "many women are weak enough to put great faith in dreams. You recollect that, very lately, an actress of the king's theatre has, upon the faith of a dream, retired from the stage into a convent, where she passes her days in pious edification."

The Duke appeared to feel the loss of his idol with the deepest mortification; but the virtuous man, believing it to have been ordained from Heaven, left her quietly to follow her own inclinations.

By these means Hortensia disengaged herself from her old gallant.

On my part I adopted the following stratagem to procure my discharge without giving the Duke any personal displeasure. I intentionally affronted the major-domo, who thereupon immediately turned me away.

On a delightful morning, just before the break of day, Hortensia and I left Madrid, and directing our course towards the Asturias, she and her female attendant in a carriage, and I following on horseback, attended by four or five valets to conduct the mules which carried our baggage, we happily passed through either Old Castile or the province of Leon, and arrived, with all our riches, safely at my father's house.

The appearance of so many mules laden with packages immediately attracted the old man's attention; and, considering them as so much treasure, afforded him the highest pleasure. He received his

daughter-in-law, whom I immediately presented to him, in the most gracious manner imaginable, and being extremely pleased with her personal demeanour, and particularly with her modest manners, which, as he expected to see a person of a lively ardent disposition, he could not very well reconcile to his pre-conceptions of her character, he complimented me in her hearing.

"My son," said he, "I applaud your choice, and I now candidly tell you that you will no longer exclusively enjoy my affection, for this lady will, I am certain, possess one half of it."

Amiable, however, as Hortensia appeared in person and manners to the eyes of Don Vincent, her fortune, which I immediately showed to him, gave him superior pleasure.

"Those bags," said I, "contain twenty thousand pistoles."

"How, twenty thousand!" exclaimed my father with precipitation. "Why! did you not inform me that her fortune would amount, in gold and jewels, to thirty thousand pistoles?"

"True," replied I; "I am in possession of a fortune to that amount; for I have ten thousand pistoles in the hands of Abel Zacharia, the great banker of Madrid."

My father seemed thunderstruck at these words. "Oh! misery, misery," exclaimed he, "what have you done! You have lent your money to"—

"Why," replied I hastily, "his credit is unquestioned. Zacharia is a good man; he never can fail."

"Never fail!" exclaimed Don Vincent ravingly. "How indiscreet a confidence! I would not to"—

"I assert even more," interrupted I again, "that Zacharia is sure; I lent him the money, not only at a great rate of interest, but I have taken his notes for it."

"At great interest, say you?" replied Don Vincent. "Why, that alone makes me suspect him. Call in this money immediately. I doubt even whether he may not, at this very moment, be a bankrupt."

Vainly did I endeavour to dispel the fears of my father; for nothing would satisfy him but a promise that I would return to Madrid and withdraw my pistoles from the hands of Zacharia. I was also obliged, in order to quiet the perturbed spirit of the good man, to hasten my departure, whatever reluctance I might have to absent myself from a wife who became more dear to me every day. Hortensia, on her part, though extremely vexed at the thoughts of parting, readily consented to the journey, the better to please my father, who felt himself extremely flattered by this mark of her attention. In fifteen days therefore after my arrival at the Asturias, I remounted my horse, and accompanied by a single servant, as well mounted as myself, departed for Madrid, making long stages, less indeed to satisfy Don Vincent, than to return as soon as it was possible to the arms of Hortensia.

The instant I arrived at Madrid, I went to the house of Abel Zacharia, who immediately asked what he could do to serve me. I replied, that I was come on purpose to beg the favour of him to pay me the money I had lent him. A deadly paleness seized the face of Zacharia as I pronounced these words. "How, sir!" said he, "withdraw your money so soon? Do you doubt my credit? Does any rumour

prevail in Madrid injurious to the house of Abel Zacharia?"

"No, Don Abel," I replied, "you always take too much care of your reputation to be in any danger of losing it; but I have purchased a large estate in the Asturias, and shall want all my money to pay for it."

"Oh! that is another matter," replied Zacharia. "I only wished for an opportunity to oblige you; and, as a proof of it, I will, in the course of the current month, remit you the ten thousand pistoles, although we agreed, as you will recollect, that when you wanted it you was to give me three months' notice before you drew it out of my hands."

I thanked Abel for his kind accommodation; and, to give the spirit of my father repose, immediately informed him of my success; but, by an answer which he instantly returned, he convinced me how impossible it is to pacify a discontented, avaricious, and jealous mind.

Don Marcos here finished the history of his adventures.

"You only wait, then," said I, "for the repayment of your money to return home. The moment you receive it, farewell Madrid and its delights!"

"Yes, Gonzales," replied he, "to-morrow I shall set off on my return to my lovely Hortensia, to whom I owe the happiness of my life. You will excuse, I trust, the impatience I discover to see her."

"Your impatience," said I, "appears to me so natural, that I cannot but applaud it, whatever pain I shall feel in your departure."

We saw each other five or six times afterwards, but at length the day of reimbursement arrived. We embraced with tears in our eyes. "Adieu,

Vanillo," said Girafa; "perhaps we shall hereafter meet again; chance may again bring us together: but if we are doomed to eternal separation, let us at least preserve a tender recollection of our friendship."

Thus ends the generality of coffee-house connections: The parties, though they meet with pleasure, separate with regret, and forget each other without difficulty.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE PLEASURES WHICH VANILLO GENERALLY PURSUED DURING HIS RESIDENCE AT MADRID.

THE regret I felt at losing the company of Don Marcos was of no longer duration than that which I felt on the departure of Don Ramirez. Pleasure being my only pursuit, I soon formed new acquaintances. I sometimes visited the royal levee, and at others the most fashionable coffee-houses of the metropolis, where I was generally extremely well amused. Groups of new faces were continually presenting themselves to my view, from which I could always select some who furnished subjects of pleasure and mirth. The poets, who daily frequented these receptacles, stunned the ears of the company by their disputes and recitations; they even frequently quarrelled and fought with each other; thereby affording, at their own expense, great entertainment to the company.

But this afforded them no concern; they seemed, indeed, to take a delight in rendering themselves ridiculous. What diverted me more than anything else in these retreats, was to hear a great concourse of people all talking at the same time; some disclosing political secrets, others detailing adventures of gallantry, others relating comic stories; forming altogether a confusion of sounds that delighted me. Sometimes, however, tired with this disagreeable noise, I quitted the coffee-house with the headache,

and strolled upon the Prado to dissipate it. Occasionally I indulged my curiosity at the audience-chamber of the Count de Olivarez, and, mixing in the motley group, observed with attention all that passed. Scenes of the most interesting kind were frequently exhibited to my view. For example, the very first time I attended, I beheld a scene which drew from me a flood of tears. The reader, perhaps, will not be displeased to learn the circumstances of it ; and they are as follows :—

A venerable-looking old man, with a long white beard, and his clothes torn almost to rags, appeared in the ring before the minister, and presented to him a petition which he held in his hand.

"What is this about, good man?" inquired the minister.

"My lord," replied the bending figure, "all the prisons of Spain have been opened to commemorate his majesty's accession to the throne, and I have been released from mine after a confinement therein of six-and-thirty years."

A confused murmur ran through the room on his pronouncing these words, and the minister himself, struck with astonishment, inquired of him the cause of so long a captivity.

"Alas!" replied the old man, "I am quite ignorant of its cause. All I know is, that six-and-thirty years ago I was made a prisoner by an order from the king, as I was then informed by those who took me; and, what will perhaps surprise your Excellency, I have not, during that long period, either undergone any examination, or been suffered to speak to any human being, except the gaolers who supplied me with my food; and they informed me

that they were forbidden to answer any question I might ask. To complete my miseries," continued he, "I have been endeavouring ever since my discharge from this earthly purgatory, to find my family; but, alas! my family are not now to be found. I had a father, a mother, a wife, and two children; but they are all either dead or lost. I have no money; and, unless you take pity on me, I shall be reduced to beggary."

The surrounding company, moved by compassion, waited in painful silence the minister's reply; who, in mild accents, addressed the poor suppliant in these terms: "Well, my friend," said he, "what is the prayer of your petition?"

"My lord," rejoined the old man, "I humbly supplicate your Excellency to send me back immediately to prison; this is all the favour I can now require."

"I perceive the meaning of your request," replied the minister with a smile, "and your wishes shall be gratified. Go; return to your prison; the keeper shall, by my order, provide you with proper clothing, comfortable linen, a clean room, a daily supply of good food, and permit you to have your liberty whenever you please."

The room rung with reiterations of applause as the Count uttered these words. But this was not all. His Excellency's humanity was not satisfied by converting the dungeon of this miserable man into a place of comfortable repose; but added to it a suitable pension, as a means of making him forget six-and-thirty years of misery and pain.

The minister, who, being as yet in the infancy of his administration, endeavoured by generous acts to obtain the good opinion of the public, felt the highest

pleasure at the popularity he had acquired by his conduct on this occasion; but the sequel of his life did not correspond with the beginning of it.

As to the old prisoner, it is well known that from the habits of confinement he made so little use of the liberty he possessed, as seldom to stir out of the prison-gates.

The coffee-house at which I had become acquainted with Girafa was that which I generally frequented; for, besides meeting with very agreeable company and conversation, I was sure to hear of, or to see some entertaining adventure. One now occurs to my recollection.

While I was sitting at the coffee-house, two officers in the army entered the room. The figure of one of them caught my attention. He was a tall man, who, by his fierce and martial air, drew on himself the notice of the whole room.

"Who is that officer?" said I softly to a gentleman near me.

"It is," replied he, "Don Torribio Truegno, captain of those royal guards called Monteros, and is universally considered as brave a man as any in the army: he has, as you see, a warlike air, perfectly correspondent to his fame. Look at him attentively."

"The more I look at him," said I, "the more I admire him. But what is the reason of his wearing a scarf round his arm?"

"He has lately received a wound," replied the gentleman with a smile, "the history of which is rather singular. I would tell it you if he were not in the public room."

"Come, then," said I, "let us retire into a private apartment."

I accordingly retired with the gentleman into a small parlour on the right hand, where he related to me the following story:—

“Don Torribio Truegno, about eight days ago, was hunting upon the plain Guadalaxara, accompanied by two subalterns belonging to his corps, all of them well mounted. Riding across those fields which lie between Mondejar and Buendia, a little man, with grey hairs, and mounted on a scrubby pony, addressed himself to Truegno with great civility, saying, ‘I conjecture, signor, that you are not conscious of being now upon the lands of a gentleman who, always keeping himself within the boundaries of his own domain and never hunting upon the lands of others, is not inclined to permit others to hunt upon his.’

“The captain, naturally hasty and passionate, eyeing the little man from head to foot, replied—

“‘Hidalgo, do you know to whom you are speaking?’

“‘Yes, sir,’ replied the little gentleman, ‘I know you are a commander of the Monteros Guard, and I politely request that you will no longer drive over my’—

“‘How!’ interrupted Torribio; ‘you intend to threaten me, I fancy, by making this request so peremptorily; and if, I suppose, I do not choose to change my course, you will desire me to meet you sword in hand.’

“‘I should be extremely sorry to be reduced to that necessity,’ replied the gentleman; ‘but if it be necessary, I am so resolved.’

“The captain, at these words, laughing in the face of his antagonist, replied, with an air of raillery,

‘By Heaven ! my little friend, I should be curious to see how you handle a sword ; will you satisfy my curiosity ?’

“With all my heart,” replied the old gentleman ; ‘since you request it with so good a grace, I have not the least objection to afford you the satisfaction.’

In pronouncing these words, he dismounted, tied his tit to a dwarf tree, drew his sword, and presented himself boldly before his enemy ; who, conceiving he should gain an easy victory, placed himself carelessly on the defensive, as if he were ashamed to contend against so feeble an adversary.

Matters, however, did not turn out much in favour of Torribio. The little gentleman, who was a fine fencer, made a dexterous lounge, and entered the sword-arm of his adversary in such a way, that the chief of the Monteros, finding, from his wound, it was impossible for him to continue the combat, galloped away full speed, boiling with rage and vexation, towards Madrid ; his two subalterns following, and laughing in their sleeves at this tragi-comic adventure.

Having gone about two hundred yards from the field of battle, he met a Hidalgo mounted on a mule.

“Signor,” said he, stopping his horse, ‘pray inform me the name of the little grey-headed gentleman who resides near Mondejar.’

“Oh ! I know who you mean,” replied the Hidalgo ; ‘it is Don Cesar de Peralta, an officer who has served many years with great honour in the army, and who now reposes at his villa under the shade of his laurels.’

Torribio, upon this information, seriously debated

the matter in his own mind ; and finding that he had been the aggressor, generously resolved to seek the friendship of Don Cesar, instead of again provoking his enmity by requiring farther satisfaction. He accordingly directed his two subalterns to return, and in his name invite Don Peralta to dine with him on the ensuing day at Madrid.

"The soldiers discharged their commission, and on their return informed Torribio that Don Cesar would certainly wait on him.

"The captain related the adventure to three general officers of his acquaintance, and invited them to the repast. They were scarce arrived at Torribio's house when they discovered Don Cesar de Peralta at the door, mounted on his pony. The captain hastened towards him, with his arm in the scarf, and would willingly have held the stirrup to assist him to alight. When he entered the room, he presented him to the general officers, saying, 'Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance Don Cesar de Peralta, my conqueror. He is a gentleman who possesses a peculiar talent of punishing those who dare to hunt on his domain without his permission.'

"'Sir,' replied the little gentleman, 'you have now my permission to hunt there whenever you please.'

"'I return you thanks for your politeness,' replied the captain ; 'but I have another favour to beg of you, which will be more agreeable : it is your friendship. Grant it to me, and accept of mine.'

"Don Cesar replied to this compliment with high and finished address ; and these two violent enemies are now become the most cordial friends."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BY WHAT ACCIDENT, AND IN WHAT SITUATION, VANILLO FOUND BERNARDINA—THE CONVERSATION THEY HAD WITH EACH OTHER, AND THE CONSEQUENCES IT PRODUCED.

RETURNING quietly to my hotel one evening, after having walked a long time in the delightful meadows of St. Jerom, I heard, as I passed through the street which leads to Toledo, a voice from a window distinctly pronounce my name. Stopping short to observe the person who had called to me, I was not a little surprised to discover that it was the object of my early passion, the dissembling Bernardina. She appeared equally astonished at seeing me; and, expressing a wish to converse with me, desired me to walk into her house.

Being curious to learn the particulars of her present situation, I very willingly complied with her request. The door was opened to me by an old woman very much resembling La Papita, and apparently in a similar employ. She introduced me into a room very neatly furnished, where I was received by Bernardina with transports of joy, and as many demonstrations of friendship, as if she had never been unfaithful.

“Oh! my Vanillo,” cried she, “happy fortune has again united us, after a separation of seven years. I cannot express the felicity I feel on seeing you again. But tell me, my friend, what are you doing at Madrid? Have you any lucrative appointment

in the metropolis? Are you, in short, in a happy and contented situation?"

I did not think it quite prudent to make a candid declaration of my wealth to such an artful hussy, lest I should have occasion to repent it.

On the contrary, I pretended that my affairs were in so low and ruinous a condition, that I found it very difficult to live.

"Is this possible?" said she. "My poor Vanillo! what a pity it is that you do not possess an ample fortune! you are by nature generous. I have not forgot the facility with which you lavished your money at Salamanca."

"I remember it also," replied I, with a sarcastic smile; "nor have I forgot the little tricks which you played me upon those occasions."

"No retrospection, Vanillo," said she, very seriously; "draw the veil of oblivion over my former conduct; I have reformed my manners, and have now only one lover. The Count de Medellin adores me; and, contented to please him alone, I reward his attachment with inviolable fidelity. But, between ourselves," continued she, "he merits my love. His person is elegantly fine, his conversation sensible, his manners agreeable; and, instead of imitating those who keep their mistresses invisible to the world, he permits me to enjoy entire liberty. His friends, who consist of counts, marquises, and dukes, visit me freely without suspicion; and, under his patronage and approbation, I have established in this house a little *coterie*, where the young lords assemble three or four evenings in a week to game and sup."

"Pray be more explicit upon this subject," inter-

rupted I with precipitation. "If you regale those noble visitors at your own expense, your purse must be richly stored; for these kinds of entertainments are not so frugal as the meals of an anchorite."

"No, certainly they are not," replied Bernardina; "nor do I pay any of the expense; that falls upon my noble visitors; and these are the measures I pursue to effect this purpose. If, for instance, there is a duke or a marquis in company, I draw them secretly aside one after the other, and whisper, 'My lord duke—my dear marquis—do you sup here to-night?' These noblemen, who perfectly understand the meaning of the question, answer 'Yes,' and respectively accompany the monosyllable with a donation of three or four doubloons. This ceremony I perform alternately with every visitor in the room, and though all contribute, each is flattered by the idea of having paid the whole expense."

"I must confess," cried I, bursting into a violent fit of laughter, "that this is a new and ingenious artifice to raise supplies. I suspect it was your kind aunt who suggested these ways and means."

"You are right," replied Bernardina; "this is the method I follow, and it has produced me considerable profit. But *à propos* of my aunt," added she, "you have not once inquired about her."

"Well!" replied I, with as much anxiety as if I had really felt great interest in her welfare, "tell me then what is become of your dear aunt; inform me of her present situation."

"She has resided these three years at Toledo with the Governor of Castile," replied Bernardina; "but the connection is at an end, and she is now about to return to Madrid."

"I congratulate you," replied I; "for with her assistance, your supper revenues will greatly increase, as it is impossible not to suppose that the charms of Signora Dalsa are still captivating."

"She is still amiable," replied the niece, "although I may tell you in confidence that her beauty is rather faded. Her last letters informed me that she discovers every morning at her toilet some decay; that the lively lustre of her early youth disappears, and that her skin is becoming brown and pimpled."

"These evils are not without remedy," said I; "there are secrets in chemistry by which the complexion may be preserved. I am acquainted with an apothecary who is the first operator in the world for metamorphosing the black and wrinkled face of age into the smooth and blooming countenance of early youth."

"You are jocose," observed Bernardina.

"Not at all," replied I; "I never spoke more seriously in all my life."

"Oh! my dear Vanillo!" exclaimed Bernardina with rapture, "if this be really true, tell me directly the name and abode of this great man."

"You know him already," replied I; "turn your eyes and you will find him now sitting by your side."

"What do I hear?" exclaimed she with extreme surprise. "How! What! is it you who possess this important secret? I cannot believe you; but if you do, you may soon acquire a greater fortune than any Indian governor ever possessed."

To obtain some credit with Bernardina I was obliged to recount to her my adventures in Italy, and to detail why and wherefore I became an apo-

thecary. I amplified on the surprising properties of the lotion and ointment, which the greatest chemist, Potoschi, my master, had invented, and taught me to compound. Bernardino listened to my discourse with interested attention; and she admired particularly what related to the Baroness de Conca, and Donna Blanch de Sorba, her mother; and could not comprehend how those ladies, such as I have described them, with pimpled skins and dark complexions, could appear fairer than the day by using the revivers of the great Potoschi.

"Gonzales, my dear friend," said she, "I consider you as an angel sent from heaven. I implore your succour for my distressed aunt; her niece also will soon want your assistance. Let me conjure you, by our former friendship, to teach me this invaluable secret."

"My lovely Bernardino," said I, "you shall be satisfied. I will purchase, early in the morning, the various ingredients for these compositions, and we will make a trial of their effects the moment your aunt arrives."

"I will write to her immediately," cried Bernardino, "to inform her of the particulars of our conversation; and I have no doubt but my letter will hasten her departure for Madrid."

After this conversation I took my leave of Bernardino; and assuring her that she should see me again in three days, I returned to my hotel.

The ensuing morning I provided the ingredients necessary to make the compounds, and by working incessantly for two whole days in my own room, which I converted into a laboratory, produced, on the third, a sufficient quantity both of the ointment and

the lotion, which I carried in the evening to the house of Bernardina, who could not help smiling when she saw me.

"My aunt is in Madrid!" exclaimed she. "An hour after the receipt of my letter she set off with the muleteers, and is just arrived; but, being fatigued with her journey, I have persuaded her to go to bed. Let us leave her to her rest for a short time. I told you," continued she with a laugh, "that my letter would hasten her departure. The interests of beauty are, I confess, very dear to the sex; and I do not think there is a woman existing who would not travel five hundred miles to improve her charms."

Entertaining ourselves for some time upon this subject with great pleasantry, I at length asked Bernardina if her aunt's beauty was really impaired.

"You must judge of that for yourself," said she; "but in my opinion her charms appear considerably decreased; and, between ourselves, I fancy this was the real reason that induced the Governor of Castile to break the connection. Happily for her, Heaven has sent a restorer of charms injured by the ravages of time; she will, under your hands, regenerate; you will render her more amiable than ever."

"She may expect as much," replied I; "for, considering my success with the Baroness and her mother, I need not despair of beautifying any face. They were *in puris naturalibus* two ugly monsters, and I converted them into beautiful angels."

"Ah! Vanillo," said Bernardina, transported by the pleasure my conversation afforded her, "you are a wonderful man. How happy am I in thus seeing you again! When you have restored my aunt to all

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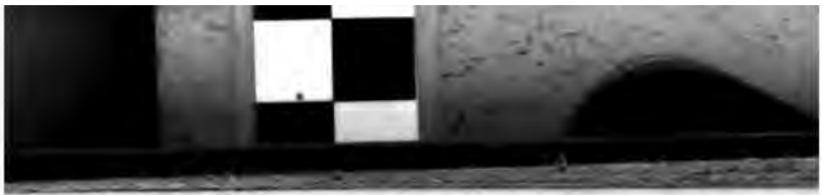
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the charms she has lost, you shall teach me the art of preserving the appearance of eternal youth."

"Ah! dissembler," cried I; "it will be long before you require assistance."

"I may do without assistance some few years, perhaps," replied Bernardino; "but time flies with so swift a wing, that one cannot too cautiously prevent the ravages of his scythe."

While I was enjoying the pleasures of a lively conversation in this way with Bernardino, her aunt, having taken her nap, awoke. No sooner did she hear that I was in the house, than she instantly arose, and, hastily slipping on a *robe-de-chambre*, descended into the room. The moment she beheld me she approached me with an eager air, and honouring me with an embrace—

"Signor Vanillo," said she, "I participate with my niece the pleasure of seeing you again. But tell me sincerely, can I give credit to the astonishing power which her letter informs me you possess?"

"She has told you nothing but the truth, and tomorrow all your doubts will vanish."

"Whatever confidence I may place in you," replied she, "I fear you will never be able to restore me to the state in which you saw me at Salamanca: to perform that, it is necessary you should possess supernatural power. Examine me attentively," continued she; "am I not frightful?"

"That you can never be," replied I; "Nature has lavished on you such a profusion of charms, that whole ages cannot rob you of them all: your beauty, it is true, is not so striking as it was when you carried away every heart in the university. However, madam," continued I, "it is a happy





circumstance for you that I am empowered, by a certain chemical preparation, to recall the youthful bloom and graceful beauty which shone upon your countenance at that early period."

I accordingly drew from my pocket, as I pronounced these words, a phial and a pot, and presenting them to her—

"There, madam," said I, "is the lotion and the ointment of the celebrated Potoschi. You have only to wash and rub your skin with them for one hour this evening, immediately before you retire to rest, and in the morning you will perceive the effect."

Signora Dalfa received my compositions with mingled hopes and fears; for, notwithstanding all my assurance, a secret distrust lurked in her mind, and damped the idea of those pleasures I had led her to expect. Her impatience, however, to try the effect of my prescription was so great, that she retired before it was dark to her chamber, when, by the assistance of her confidential maid, she washed and rubbed herself for three or four hours, and then, according to my recommendation, went to bed, but found it not an easy matter to procure repose.

Sleep, however, at length closed her eyes, and enabled her to taste her happiness in dreams until the return of day; when, waking with a start, and yielding to the curiosity which disturbed her pillow, she flew to her toilet, and discovered in it a figure so transformed from what it was, that she scarcely recollected her own face. Calling her servant, "Beatrice," said she, "come here directly; come and contemplate the beauties of youth."

Beatrice, to make more haste, ran half undressed to her mistress, and, looking at her steadfastly, ex-

claimed, "Good Heavens! what is it I behold? You have the complexion of a girl of fifteen! Signor Gonzales must certainly be something more than a sorcerer to have made you thus young again. I will carry the news directly to Madam Bernardino."

"Yes, Beatrice," exclaimed Signora Dalfa, "go and announce this prodigy to her; she ought not to be less delighted with it than myself."

The maid ran and awakened Bernardino. "Come," said she with glee, "come and see my mistress, your aunt. By St. Apollo, you will not know her; she is now as brilliant as a star."

Bernardina immediately arose, and went into the chamber of her aunt; who, still at her toilet, added to the effects of my composition all the powers which the arts of accomplished coquetry could bestow. "My dear aunt!" exclaimed she, drawing back with surprise, "is it you that I behold? What charms! This transformation will excite my jealousy; I shall now no longer share with you the public admiration."

"Do not joke, my dear niece," replied Signora Dalfa, seriously; "but tell me sincerely how I look."

"Ravishingly," replied Bernardino; "you have regained all the graces of your early youth. Vanillo has taken from you fifteen good years at least."

Just at this period of their conversation I entered the room; for I was too impatient to learn the success of my composition any longer to delay inquiry.

"Incomparable chemist!" exclaimed the aunt the moment she saw me, "I have been waiting to pay those acknowledgments to you that are so much your due. I cannot sufficiently testify the gratitude of my heart." At the same time, to show me how

sensibly she felt the services I had rendered her, she embraced me with a warmth and tenderness I had never before experienced; and her lovely niece followed her example, saying, "My aunt thanks you for the favour you have already conferred on her, and I thank you by anticipation for those you are to perform for me; for you must not forget that you have promised to reveal to me this important secret."

"I repeat my promise," replied I. "You shall soon be as wise upon this subject as I am myself."

"But, Vanillo," said the delighted widow, "you seem not to know the value of the treasure you possess. Do you recollect that you may gain an immense fortune by secretly selling these curious compositions? Leave the care of collecting customers to us; we will furnish you with them in great abundance. Why should you bury this useful talent? Is it not more advisable to render it profitable?"

"My aunt is right," interposed Bernardina. "You must be an enemy to your own interest if, having the means so easily in your power, you refuse to enrich yourself. It depends entirely upon yourself to become, in a short time, a man of fortune. The improvement of a few fashionable faces will circulate your fame; and the moment you are in vogue, gold will be showered upon you from all quarters. Exclusive of the number of old dowagers by whom you will be oppressed, superannuated gallants will pester you with purses in their hands, and implore you to rid them of their wrinkles. In short, you will immediately make an immense fortune without being obliged to anybody."

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prospects to such a degree, that they inflamed my heart with avarice. I felt my bosom glow with an affection for riches. I had hitherto only loved money from a report of its utility; but I now began to love the thing itself, and to forget its use, and I experienced all the delights which misers feel in the possession of their gold. If I had been at this moment in my closet alone, I verily believe I should have kissed my ducats one after the other, from pure admiration of their matter and form.

The frame of mind which the exhortations of Bernardino and her aunt had produced disposed me to follow their advice.

"Ladies," said I, "the conflict is over; it is settled; I have determined to adopt your scheme. I will instantly provide a large quantity of my lotion and pomade, and in the meantime you will discover those rich dowagers who may want them."

"Go, go," said Bernardino, "leave the rest to us; we will find them out. The desire which you know all women have to look handsome, ought to convince you that there is no danger of our success."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

VANILLO SELLS HIS LOTION AND OINTMENT, GAINS A LARGE SUM OF MONEY, AND BECOMES MISERLY IN PROPORTION AS HE GROWS RICH.

COMMENCING my operations in chemistry by converting my bedroom into a laboratory, and by furnishing it with a number of phials and pots, I employed three days and three nights in distilling, through an alembic, the juices of various plants proper for my purpose, and having prepared *cosmetic* sufficient to produce at least twenty transformations, I repaired to the residence of my coadjutors to inform them that I only waited for the patients they had promised to procure.

"You shall not want customers," said Signora Dalfa; "we are already prepared to place two under your hands; one is a Countess, who has lately lost, what she is most fond of, the public admiration; the other is a devotee, the wife of an Alcade, who is anxious to fix the wavering affections of her husband. Go," continued she, putting a paper with their respective addresses into my hand; "go and visit these patients; ask to speak with their waiting-maids, who have received orders to conduct you privately to their mistresses' apartments."

Impatient to levy on the old ladies the projected contributions, I went immediately to the house of the Countess, whose servant introduced me, saying, "This, madam, is the celebrated chemist who has discovered the art of repairing the injuries of time."

"Alas!" said the Countess, with a sigh, "I doubt whether all his art will be able to give me a face that will be pleasing to the eye of the world."

"O madam," replied I, in the language of quackery, "you do injustice to yourself; you have less cause to complain of the effects of time than you imagine; it has only faded your complexion and concealed your beauty, and, when the veil is removed, it will again beam forth in pristine lustre. The lotion is principally intended to recall departed bloom. I can also assure you that it possesses another admirable quality; which is, that it operates its effect in one night. A lady who retires to rest with the wrinkles of age may rise the next morning with a face as smooth as glass."

"Ha! what is it you say?" interrupted the Countess with precipitation. "If you really possess this valuable secret, tell me directly how I must use it; in boasting its excellence you provoke my impatience to try it."

I accordingly gave the Countess the proper directions, and, presenting her with a phial and a pot, quitted the room, telling her that I should return in the morning, confident of finding her changed from black to white.

From the house of the Countess I proceeded to that of the Alcade, whose pious wife was inclined to become my patient. On my arrival I asked for an old waiting-maid, whose name was written on my paper. She soon appeared; and, when she heard me say that I had something to communicate to her mistress, she replied, with a smile—

"I guess who you are; you are welcome; you are called for here with heart and voice;" and at the same time she conducted me by a private staircase to

the apartments of her mistress, who received me very graciously.

This lady, who in her early youth had possessed an extraordinary share of beauty, still possessed sufficient to content any reasonable husband. I therefore addressed myself to her in these terms :

"I doubt, madam, whether I am right in waiting upon you ; for, although some of your personal charms are flown, you still retain so many others that you cannot want my assistance to increase the number of your admirers."

" You are very much deceived," replied she, " if you conceive that I wish to increase my beauties in order to increase the number of my admirers : my only wish is to render myself pleasing to my husband. This, perhaps, will appear very extraordinary to you ; but it is the truth. I love my husband, and would not wish to improve my beauty if it were not to render myself more agreeable to him and to regain his heart."

" Then I understand by this, madam," replied I, " that your husband is devoted to gallantry."

" It is, I confess, his foible," replied the Alcade's wife ; " let us unite our efforts to reclaim him. Increase, if it be possible, the virtue of your application. In short, render me so charmingly beautiful that he may never be tempted to swerve from his duty."

I instructed the Alcade's wife, while I presented her with a phial and a pot, how my lotion and pomade were to be used, and bid her adieu until the same hour the ensuing morning.

This lady, I have been since informed, was more impatient even than the Countess to experience the effects of my compounds ; and, without waiting until

it was night, rubbed herself all over with both the restoratives, and going to bed, gave orders that she might be left undisturbed to her repose.

Rising the ensuing morning with anxious curiosity to learn whether my two patients would receive me with compliments or reproaches, I first visited the Countess, whom I found at her toilet; her maid looking at her with the eye of admiration, and praising her new-blown beauties to the skies.

"Approach, learned Doctor," cried she with joy and satisfaction; "approach and receive your merited applause."

"I rejoice, madam," replied I, "to find you so contented with my remedies."

"How! contented!" replied she; "rather say enchanted. Already had I renounced the company of youth, and abandoned all places of public resort; but I may now indulge the pleasing hope of appearing in the world once more, and of renewing all the pleasures I have relinquished."

"You may, madam," replied I, "boldly resume your station in the world; you will no longer be overlooked in the circles of the gay, and I am certain that every gentleman of true taste will welcome your return with pleasure."

"You are a flatterer, Doctor," replied the Countess; "but when you speak in this style, you rather resound the praises of your own art than of my beauty. But however that may be, the services you have rendered cannot be too amply rewarded. Here is a purse containing fifty doubloons, by which I merely pay for the pot and phial; for my gratitude shall not end here, if you will take care to preserve the beauty you have so successfully restored."

This dialogue, the latter part of which was most pleasing to me, being concluded, I retired, as well satisfied with the Countess as she was with me. Never, indeed, having before received so large a bounty, I began to think that the lovely widow and her charming niece had induced me to adopt no unprofitable employment.

As I seemed to be in the train of touching the cash, I went directly to the house of the Alcade's wife, who afforded me a very gracious reception. This lady had just risen from her toilet, with joy sparkling in her eyes.

"Madam," said I, "there is an air of satisfaction in your countenance, from whence I draw the most auspicious conclusions. Appearances must be extremely deceitful indeed if you are not contented with my prescriptions. Your beauty seems improved to the full extent of your wishes."

"I have," replied she, "attained the summit of my wishes. Your compounds have done wonders," added she, laughing with all her force. "I must relate the circumstance to you. My husband used sometimes to visit my chamber, but it was generally with the coldness of indifference, scarcely deigning to look at me, or, if he looked, it was with a disregard which wounded both my tenderness and vanity. This morning he repeated his visit; the change he immediately observed in my charms awakened his sleeping affection; and, caressing me with his former fondness, he lavished the warmest praises on my reviving beauty."

In pronouncing these words she burst into a laugh of ecstatic pleasure, which I enviously wished to accompany; but, the more perfectly to act the doctor's part, I carefully preserved my gravity.

Having indulged her laugh, she resumed a serious countenance. "Incomparable chemist," said she, "do not stop here, but employ whatever is most powerful and efficacious in your art to preserve the charms your art has given me. You have performed a miracle in warming the cold bosom of my husband; but you will perform a still greater, if you can render me sufficiently amiable to fix his desires."

"Madam," replied I, "the achievement is by no means easy, but I do not think it impossible."

"Really!" exclaimed she. "Oh! if you can accomplish this point I shall reward your services with liberality."

The tone of voice in which she pronounced these words persuaded me I might rely on her promise; and, to give her words still greater energy, she accompanied them with a rich diamond ring, which she put on my finger, saying, "Take that as a small proof of my intended gratitude." I retired from the house of the Alcade with equal satisfaction as from that of the Countess, fully convinced that the ring could not be worth less than a hundred pistoles. To be more certain, however, I showed it to an old jeweller, whose shop was near, and who, after examining it for a long time, asked me whether it was to be sold. "No," replied I, "the owner only wishes to be informed of its value."

"If the owner," replied the jeweller, "chooses to part with it, I will give him five hundred pistoles."

Perfectly satisfied with his appreciation, I thanked the jeweller, and returned gaily home, saying, "Courage, Master Chemist, this is a good morning's work; if you continue to have many more such, you will soon grow rich."

The moment I returned home I shut myself up in my laboratory, opened my strong box, that is, the portmanteau which contained my wealth, and put into it the Countess's purse, saying with as affectionate a voice as if I had been speaking to a beloved mistress, "Go, my brilliant friends, thou dear and charming rewards of my chemic labours; go and accompany the ducats of my uncle; for they are your near relations."

Seriously, if any person had overheard the ridiculous conversation I held with my gold, they would have taken me for a madman. But I was in fact troubled with the Demon of Avarice, and I reckoned that my lotion and pomade would soon acquire me great fame, and produce a large fortune, which I computed incessantly according to the inclination of my avaricious imagination, without once reflecting that I was deceiving myself by my calculation.

I went in the afternoon to return my thanks to Signora Dalfa and her niece for the two excellent patients they had recommended to me.

"We have others ready for you," said Bernardina. "An old and opulent Marchioness, whose visage is really become frightful from the lapse of time, waits the arrival of a young Italian Count, who is coming to Madrid on purpose to marry her. They have never seen each other. The Count is apprised that the Marchioness is not handsome; but this is no impediment on his part, for the pockets of the widow are lined with gold. The lady, however, notwithstanding the reliance she places in her riches, apprehends that the Count, when he sees her, may be inclined to break off the match. My aunt and I have recommended her to you, and our description of your profound science has excited her curiosity."

Here is her address," added she, giving me a slip of paper, "and the name of the maid to whom you must address yourself: go and pay her a visit immediately."

I went without loss of time to the house of the Marchioness; and I was never, in the whole course of my life, so astonished as when, on entering the room, I perceived, reclining on a sofa, a diminutive female, with brown complexion, blear eyes, and full of wrinkles. I could not believe that this was the person for whom an Italian Count was quitting his country to marry and live with at Madrid. But she soon removed all doubt from my mind.

"Doctor," said she, "pray examine me with great attention, and tell me what you think of my beauty. Do not you think the young cavalier, who is coming so far for my sake, will be well rewarded for his trouble?"

I was quite confounded by this address, for I had never before known a single instance of a woman turning her own person into ridicule.

The Marchioness, although nearly sixty years of age, was, it is true, much more injured by ugliness than by age; and I could willingly have applauded her pleasantry, but that I was too polite to take such a liberty, and besides it might not have been very agreeable to her inclination.

"Madam," said I, "it is true that, in your present situation, I would not advise you to contend with the three Goddesses for the apple of Love; but, without employing supernatural powers, or even the utmost extent of human art, I think you may be so improved that your husband shall have reason to boast of having an amiable wife."

The Marchioness, at these words, immediately burst into a roar of laughter, and, still seeming to joke at her own expense, said—

“ My good Doctor, I have no doubt of your great abilities, but I can never believe them sufficient to render my person pleasing. Prevent it from being despised, and I shall be perfectly contented.”

“ Madam,” replied I, with an air of confidence, “ I will do much more: I assure you, that to-morrow morning, when you look in your glass, you will be, like Narcissus, charmed with the view of your own image.”

The Marchioness again burst into a fit of laughter, replying, “ You are a bold man, Doctor, to undertake this task; and I think I may defy you, with all your drugs, your washes, your ointments, and your lotions, to accomplish your promise. I have no objection, however,” continued she, “ to try the experiment; but I consent rather to undeceive you than from any hope I entertain of becoming an agreeable woman; and besides, I must annex a condition to my consent, that you will not, upon your word of honour, tell any person that I have been foolish enough to follow your directions under the flattering idea you can render me handsome in spite of nature.”

I gave her accordingly a sacred promise to this effect, and, leaving her a phial and pot, with particular direction to rub herself well with their contents, took my leave.

I must confess that upon this occasion I trembled for the success of my prescriptions, notwithstanding all the experience I had had of their uncommon powers. Their operation could not be unbounded; and as the extraordinary case in which they were

now applied certainly justified my fears, I passed interval of anxious inquietude until I returned ensuing morning to the house of the Marchioness whom I had the pleasure to find rejuvenated by at least twenty years, and so finely embellished by dress, that I was in danger, like another Pygmalion, of falling in love with the figure I had made.

"Doctor," exclaimed the Marchioness in transports of joy, "I will make reparation to your injured honour. I confess I thought you an empiric, but have very agreeably undeceived me, and I now consider you as the most incomparable practitioner the world has ever produced."

"Madam," replied I, "to speak to you with candour equal to your own, I can easily forgive the doubts you entertained of the efficacy of my composition; for I confess that I did not myself expect they would produce so happy an effect."

Overjoyed to find herself in a situation to sit once again in the circles of fashion, the old Marchioness presented me with a purse containing a hundred sovereigns, on condition that I would regularly furnish her with sufficient quantities of these grand specimens. Promising her an ample supply, I took my leave, ordering to enclose my sovereigns in the portmanteau which contained the pistoles of the Countess and the ducats of my uncle; a ceremony I could not perform without giving my increasing wealth new testimony of my idolatry.

CHAPTER XL.

*IN WHICH THE READER WILL FIND A STRANGE REVERSE
OF FORTUNE, AND A DEPLORABLE TRAIT OF HUMAN
MALICE.*

THE more a dropsical person drinks, the drier he grows ; and the more a miser amasses, the more covetous he is of riches.

Signora Dalsa and her niece industriously contributed to advance my practice, under an idea that I would perform my promise of teaching them the art of compounding my lotion and my pomade, and I certainly did not intend to disappoint their expectations ; but the reverse of fortune which I all at once experienced, and which I shall now recount, put it out of my power.

One morning, while I was enjoying in contemplation the prosperity of my affairs, I was extremely surprised to see a man enter my room with the audacity of an alguazil. On asking him who he wanted, " You," replied he fiercely, while he exhibited to my view a golden medal which hung upon his breast between his shirt and his skin, and upon which were engraven the tremendous insignia of the Holy Inquisition. " I have the honour to be an agent to the Holy Office, and I am ordered by my superiors to arrest you. Follow me ; I will conduct you to your prison."

Distracted by this information, and scarcely knowing what I was about, I endeavoured to seize and grapple with the officer ; but he immediately laughed

in my face, saying, "Young gentleman, you are taking dangerous measures; you may, perhaps, be ignorant of the respect which is due to this high tribunal. All persons, of whatever quality or condition, who are arrested by its officers, surrender themselves without resistance; and if any one, which is very rare, either from ignorance or obstinacy, shows the slightest disposition to resist, all persons are bound to aid in executing the order of the Grand Inquisition. Come, therefore, quietly with me, unless you rather choose to be dragged ignominiously along by force and violence."

Perceiving from this address that all opposition would be useless, I followed the officer, who immediately conducted me to the prison of the Holy Tribunal, where a gaoler, surrounded by a band of guards, immediately enclosed me in a dungeon, saying, "The Commissary of this Holy Institution will be with you presently. Prepare yourself, therefore, to answer the questions he shall propound with sincerity and precision." Having pronounced these words, he retired, leaving me in a stupefaction of grief and astonishment, from which I was not perfectly recovered when the Commissary arrived.

The Commissary, after asking my name and my profession, exhorted me, for my own interest, faithfully to discover all the wealth I possessed, assuring me, in order to produce a readier compliance, that if I was innocent, as he believed I was, all the property would be restored to me with religious fidelity; but that, if I concealed the most trifling part of it from the knowledge of my judges, all my wealth, real and personal, movable and immovable, would be confiscated. "You ought not to doubt," continued this

honest minister of justice, "the integrity of the Holy Office; and if you are not guilty, you may rest assured that all your effects will be scrupulously restored into your hands."

Duped by this perfidious assurance, and imagining I was dealing with saints, I was foolish enough to confess that I had money in my portmanteau at the hotel, and discovered not only its species, but its amount.

The Commissary, eager to make the seizure, immediately repaired to the hotel, commanded the host, in the name of the Holy Office, to open the door of my chamber; and, without farther ceremony, took away not only my portmanteau, but all my clothes, neither of which I have since seen.

While this expedition was performing, I lay in my dungeon extended on a bed of straw in all the horrors of imprisonment, and vainly searching my mind to discover a possible cause for my apprehension.

"What crime," said I, "have I committed, to deserve this cruel punishment? My conscience does not accuse me of any offence within the ordinary jurisdiction of the Holy Office. They must certainly have mistaken me for some other person."

Unable to satisfy my suspense, I became by degrees a prey to grief, and, feeling all the violence of despair, uttered my complaints so loudly, that I made the walls of my dungeon re-echo with my cries.

At the noise I occasioned in thus deplored the severity of my fate, one of those guards who were night and day incessantly on the watch, opened the dungeon door, and, giving me five or six heavy blows with his musket across my shoulders, "Silence," said

he, with a hoarse voice, "silence; and learn, that the holy prison where you now are, the most profound silence is observed, which no one is permitted to disturb. Recollect that no prisoner here is permitted to complain; for the Holy Inquisition, being incapable of committing the least injustice, is justly offended by those who even seem to think it so. I tell you this once for all; and therefore, if again raise your voice in lamentation so as to be heard, I shall treat you with more rigour than I have already felt. Take warning from what I say."

On uttering these words he shut the door of the dungeon, and left me to my own reflections. I must be one. Perceiving that patience was my only source, I determined to make a virtue of necessity which is no easy task under the pains of lingering sufferance, unless Heaven kindly interposes its aid. I fancy it had the goodness to do at this conjuncture, insensibly absorbing my troubles, and considering them as a punishment of my past offences, I became tranquil and resigned.

"Instead, Vanillo," reasoned I with myself, "suffering yourself to despair, make a pious use of your afflictions: conceive that the Almighty is putting your virtue a second time to trial; and recollect your miraculous escape from the prison of Avila. The Condeidor had nearly involved you in the same punishment with those guilty persons in whose company you were found, but Heaven released you from the peril, and you ought to hope that He will not abandon you in this. You will be tried by enlightened judges, by holy men, who will immediately order you to be set at liberty, and will restore your money to the utmost farthing."

These reflections induced me to wish most ardently for the day of trial. It arrived on the third day of my captivity. The gaoler conducted me under a strong guard to the tribunal of the Grand Inquisition, which was in a spacious hall, hung round with green cloth, at the end of which stood a large crucifix of white marble, finely sculptured and raised almost to the ceiling. The judge, who was a member of the Holy Order of St. Dominic, was conspicuously seated in a magnificent chair at the extremity of a long table. He looked round him with all the arrogance of power. His secretary, a little priest, blacker than a mole, was seated on a stool opposite to him. The moment my eye caught the figure of this formidable Minos, I ran towards him and threw myself at his feet, hoping by this means to move his feeling and touch his heart.

Useless humanity! He commanded me to rise, and then ordered me to declare the crime for which I had been arrested.

I replied that I was totally ignorant of the cause, and implored with great humility his very illustrious reverence to have the goodness to inform me.

"Sir," replied the Inquisitor, calmly, "that is not our practice; you are now in a court of secular jurisdiction: it is incumbent on you to declare the cause of your imprisonment, and I exhort you to discover it immediately, as it is the only means by which you can regain your liberty."

Struck with extreme astonishment at these words, I threw myself on my knees a second time before my judge, and burst into a flood of tears. "O holy father!" exclaimed I, "how is it possible for me to discover a matter of which I am totally ignorant?"

"Useless prevarication," replied the monk, un-

moved by my distress ; "accuse yourself this mor or be silent."

I again attempted to represent to him the impossibility of complying with his demand ; but the G Inquisitor, with inflexible sternness, persisted simply repeating his question, until piqued by seeming obstinacy, he ordered me to be silent, sounded the silver bell which stood before him the table, as a signal for the holy myrmidons to proach.

At this moment an object, which I could not be without great mortification, immediately entered hall ; it was my portmanteau and other property carried by two men under the protection of a st guard, and followed by the commissary who seized them. At the sight of these beloved sp my eyes instinctively shed a flood of tears, seemed to feel they were taking a last farewell. Inquisitor, however, having caused the portman to be opened in my presence, and an inventory taken of its contents, assured me the whole would exactly restored to me whenever I was released from the Inquisition. But this wealth, great as it would not content these gentlemen. They searched my person, and when I tell you they took even my pocket handkerchief, you will easily conjecture they did not leave the ring which had given me by the alcade's wife.

This ceremony being performed, and the G Inquisitor having again exhorted me not to disclose of the cause of my imprisonment, released me from the court with my effects, which were closely guarded by the little black priest and the commissary.

The gaoler, when the hall was cleared, reconducted me to my dungeon, where I passed the remainder of the day without either eating or drinking, and the succeeding night without closing my eyes. The declaration which the Grand Inquisitor had required me to make continually recurred to my mind ; but the more I thought of it, the more absurd I felt it to be.

At the expiration of three days I was again conducted into the presence of this judge, who said, "Well, sir, will you now declare the cause of your imprisonment ?"

"How is it possible for me to divine it ?" replied I. "Do you not perceive, O holy father, that you are requiring me to perform a physical impossibility. I am entirely ignorant who it is that has denounced me to the Holy Office, and ignorant I must for ever remain, unless you will have the goodness to inform me. If I have accusers, why are they not confronted with me? This is not only the surest but the shortest mode of establishing my guilt or proving my innocence."

The Inquisitor, shaking his head, interrupted me. "I perceive," said he, "that you have no inclination to be immediately released from your confinement. We have seen witnesses against you, all of them good citizens, and men of the highest honour and integrity. You are, without doubt, well apprised of the facts they are capable of adducing against you. Regulate your conduct accordingly. Confess with a good grace that you are guilty of the crime they impute to you. It is only by confession that you can prevent the rigorous sentence which the Holy Office pronounces on all prisoners who obstinately and contumaciously deny their guilt."

The Grand Inquisitor, having uttered this admonition, left the hall, followed by his adjuncts—that is to say, by his secretary and the commissary—and I was reconducted to my dungeon much more dissatisfied with my second audience than I had been with my first.

“I am compelled,” said I, “to accuse myself. But of what crime? The crime of which my accusers have deposed that I am guilty. But what crime is this? This confounds me. I cannot, upon a strict examination, find that my conscience reproaches me.” The doubloons of my dropsical patient at Murcia, and those of the licentiate of Salablanca, occurred to my mind, and I was weak enough to conceive that these matters were the cause of my arrest. Reflecting, however, that these were not the sort of offences of which the Holy Office had a right to take cognisance, I comforted myself upon these points, and only felt an anxiety to learn who were my accusers, and what was the kind of offence they laid to my charge. At length, on a third audience, the secret was disclosed in the way I shall now relate.

The Grand Inquisitor asked me, as upon the two preceding audiences, if I was still ignorant of the cause of my detention; and upon my answering that I neither knew nor could conjecture the cause, the secretary opened a register which lay before him, and in which were written the depositions taken against me.

“The secretary,” said the Inquisitor, “is going to read the heads of the several accusations which are brought against you. Listen to them attentively, and you will perceive that the Holy Inquisition, always slow to punish, takes care to be well informed of the

conduct of the guilty before it proceeds against them."

The secretary, the moment the Inquisitor had finished this harangue, began to read the depositions of my accusers, and they all concurred precisely in imputing to me the crime of sorcery, by assuring "all whom it might concern, that a certain person named Gonzales, calling himself a chemist, had, without license from the Corregidor, secretly and clandestinely sold to certain females a certain pomade and a certain lotion, which at the instigation, and by the assistance and operation of the devil, changed the course of nature, and converted the decrepitude of age into the activity of youth."

While this accusation was reading, I could not refrain from bursting into a fit of laughter, which, considering the place and the circumstances I was in, was certainly very ill-timed.

The secretary appeared so offended by this irreverence, that he immediately discontinued reading, and the Inquisitor looking at me obliquely, said, "My friend, *hic ridere nefas.*"

These three words brought me to such a serious recollection of my offence, that, throwing myself on my knees, I humbly begged pardon for this disrespectful behaviour, assuring him that it was impossible for me to restrain the laugh which had so indiscreetly escaped me on hearing the accusation.

"What is there in it so ridiculous, then?" replied the Inquisitor, gravely; "you will learn, I fancy, that it is extremely serious."

"Permit me, then, Mr. Inquisitor," replied I, with vivacity, "to point out to your reverence the absurdity of it. I possess, it is true, the secret of compounding

a certain pomade and a certain lotion which preserves the complexion and improves the skin ; but there is nothing unnatural in the operation ; and I solemnly assure you that the devil has nothing to do with it."

" That fact is not positively averred," replied the judge ; " the accusation alleges that you can convert an old woman into a young girl ; that you can restore lost beauty ; and then it avers that you are either a sorcerer or a chemist."

" O Heavens ! " exclaimed I, " what accusers have you raised up against me ! I am inclined to think that they must be either apothecaries or perfumers, who, possessing no invention of their own, are armed by envy against a man who has made a useful discovery."

I observed that during this discourse, the Grand Inquisitor, accustomed as he was to dissemble his thoughts, seemed sensible not only of my innocence, but that I had discovered my accusers ; but, for the honour of the Holy Office, he carefully avoided the avowal of it, because by such an avowal he would have been obliged to set me at liberty, as an innocent man falsely accused, and to have restored me my property. Suddenly putting an end therefore to all further conversation, " We will scrutinise this matter to the bottom," said the Inquisitor ; " it is a nice question. If there be really no magic in your composition, it is but just that you should be immediately enlarged."

Such was the result of my third examination, from whence I retired once more to my dungeon, with as much gaiety as if this honest Inquisitor had absolved me from all the charges of my accusers.

My joy, however, was of short duration ; for, eight

days afterwards, the judge having caused me to be again brought into his presence, said, "I have bad news to announce to you; your cause takes an unfavourable turn. Your accusers have adduced new charges against you, and maintain that you deserve to be burned as an enchanter. They allege that you metamorphose; and they cite, among other females upon whom you have exercised your art, a certain marchioness, who, only fifteen days ago, appeared in all the decrepitude of age, but who now shines with the bloom of youth. This, as you will readily conceive, does not contribute to your discharge. Chemistry is incapable of producing such extraordinary effects; and the inference that the devil has some concern in these transactions seems well founded. There are even two witnesses who swear that they have heard you conjure up evil spirits to assist you in fabricating your compositions."

"Ah, the villains!" exclaimed I, on hearing these last words; "who is it that can be wicked enough to invent such falsehoods? What can I have done to those two miserable deponents that they should thus dare to calumniate me? May the forked lightning of Heaven flash upon"—

"No imprecations," interrupted the Inquisitor, "no invectives. Retire to your prison, and tranquillise your agitated soul until it is clearly decided whether you are a sorcerer, an enchanter, a chemist, or the devil."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE CONSOLATION VANILLO RECEIVED DURING HIS CONFINEMENT.

THE Inquisitor's last words afforded very little consolation to my mind. "Holy God!" exclaimed I, as I entered my cell, "what will be the end of all these machinations? My judges, whether from ignorance or malice, have only to declare that my pomade has a cabalistic smell, and the poor chemist will be condemned to the flames. O Heavens! innocent as I am, I may be burned alive at the next *auto-da-fe*.

This reflection deeply afflicted my mind, which sunk into so profound a melancholy, as would, in all probability, soon have bereaved me of my senses, if Heaven had not averted the misfortune by sending me, on the ensuing day, consolation which I never expected.

One of the guards, who generally supplied me with my allowance of victuals, on entering my cell, appeared, contrary to custom, inclined to speak to me.

"Unhappy prisoner," said he in a low tone of voice, "is not your name Vanillo Gonzales?"

"It is, my friend," replied I; "that is my name."

"Then," replied the guard, "I am charged with a message which I have undertaken to deliver to you at the risk of all the danger to which I expose myself

by interesting myself in your affairs. There are two ladies so anxious for your safety, that they are stirring heaven and earth in order to release you from the fangs of the Inquisition. They have already engaged several powerful noblemen to interest themselves in your cause; and I can assure you, that the power of their intercession is so great, that you have every reason to hope for a speedy release."

A ray of comfort beamed upon my afflicted mind.

"My friend," replied I to the guard, "it is mortifying to my feelings that I am only able to reward your kindness by words, for the Holy Office has deprived me of"—

"I know it well," replied he with precipitation; "they have only left you that which it was not in their power to take away; but I expect no more from you than mere thanks; if I desire more, the ladies who interest themselves so warmly in your favour will reward me liberally."

"Tell me," said I, "tell me the names of these charitable females, who are attempting this enterprise for my deliverance."

"Excuse me, Signor Gonzales," replied he, "I cannot satisfy your curiosity on this subject, for they expressly forbade me to disclose their names; but they, at the same time, desired me to inform you, that they would never rest until you were released from confinement."

The guard, having in this manner discharged his commission, hastily retired, lest his longer stay might excite suspicion.

After his departure, "I wish," said I, "that this

friendly guard had told me the names of my generous protectors, whom I suspect to be the countess and the alcade's wife, or perhaps the marchioness. These ladies, being informed by common report of my misfortune, are impelled by gratitude to relieve my distress. But may I not deceive myself by this conjecture? May not the lovely agents who are making so many efforts in my favour rather be Signora Dalfa and her niece?" I paused for some time upon this idea. "Yes," cried I, "it must be them, I can doubt of it no longer. The rumour of my imprisonment has reached their ears, and Bernardino has certainly applied to the Count de Medellin to intercede for me."

The circumstance which confirmed me still more in this opinion was, that as I had not yet communicated to them the promised secret, the fear of losing it would induce them to solicit my liberty.

It was in fact these two ladies who had tampered with the guard. He acknowledged it to me on the following day.

"It is true, Signor Gonzales," said he, "that you are indebted to Bernardino and Signora Dalfa, her aunt, for the trifling service I rendered you yesterday. They engaged me to inform you, that having heard you were in custody of the Holy Office, they had raised a party to protect you. The Count de Medellin, and the Prior of Castile, on their entreaties, have importuned the Grand Inquisitor, with whom they are particularly intimate; and I have no doubt they will obtain your enlargement. Not, indeed," continued the guard, "without considerable difficulty; for this judge informed his noble friends that

you were charged with sorcery, and you know that sorcery is a crime to which the Inquisition shows no mercy. You may, however, expect everything from the influence of two such friends."

These observations gave new inquietude to my mind. "If the Inquisitor," said I, "obstinately persists in his inclination to make me guilty, he will pay no regard to the solicitations of these noblemen, who, on their part, piqued at having requested the release of a prisoner in vain, will quarrel with him, and I shall be the victim of their disagreement."

In truth, on the evening of the ensuing day, the guard, in bringing me my supper, said to me, "I have just seen the ladies, and they desire me to inform you, that the Count de Medellin and the Prior of Castile were so little satisfied with the success of their application to the Grand Inquisitor, that they have applied to the Count de Olivarez, the Prime Minister, and requested him, from motives of humanity, to interpose on your behalf, and save an innocent man from the flames. They described to him the metamorphoses attributed to your pomade, and his Excellency, after a hearty laugh, has assured them that you shall not fall a victim to the holy indignation of the Inquisition. Of this the ladies charged me to give you information. In a few days I will acquaint you what the Count de Olivarez shall have done in this affair."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE MANNER AND CONDITION IN WHICH VANILLO WAS RELEASED FROM THE DUNGEON OF THE HOLY INQUISITION.

THE report which the guard conveyed to me afforded me some hope of being released. Conscious that the Count de Olivarez, less minister than king, was capable of effecting whatever he pleased, I persuaded myself that the Grand Inquisitor would readily release me upon his request; and I was not deceived in my conjectures.

The minister, on going as usual to the royal levee, met the Inquisitor in the ante-chamber, and, accosting him with a smile, drew him aside, saying, "Mr. Inquisitor, I have a favour to request of your reverence."

"A favour to request?" replied the monk with an humble aspect. "I beg you will command me."

"There is," replied the minister, "in the prisons of the Inquisition, a celebrated chemist named Gonzales, and you will do me a favour by setting him at liberty."

"The evidence against him," replied the Inquisitor, "proves most clearly that he deals in *magic*; but I cannot refuse anything to your Excellency: he shall be emancipated to-morrow. But," continued he, "I trust that your Excellency will think it right that his enlargement should be managed in such a

way as not to discredit the proceedings of our Holy Office."

"I am willing he should be so discharged," replied the minister. "God forbid that I should wish, in the slightest degree, to prejudice the authority of your high tribunal. I shall be content if this prisoner is by any means delivered safe and sound out of your custody."

The Inquisitor punctually performed his promise. But it was necessary that I should previously undergo certain ceremonies which the Holy Office scrupulously observe upon such occasions, and which, as I no longer dread its power, I will venture to describe.

On the day after the Prime Minister had applied to the Grand Inquisitor, I was conducted into a large hall, where the Inquisitor waited to give me leave of absence.

"Gonzales," said he, "your process is at an end, and you are now about to be discharged from prison; but, in conformity to ancient usage, you must first confess that you are—*guilty*."

"How, guilty!" interrupted I hastily; "I never will confess that."

"Listen to me with attention," interrupted the monk in his turn, "and do not perversely injure your own interests. As the Holy Inquisition never arrests any person unjustly, it is always expected that when a prisoner is released, he shall, notwithstanding his innocence, confess himself guilty, in order that he may entitle himself to mercy."

Confounded by this metaphysical reasoning, I confessed everything that the Inquisitor asked of me.

"Now," said he, "there is only one thing more remains to be done to experience the mercy of the Holy Office;" and, at the same time, opening a missal which lay upon the table, and desiring me to place my hand upon it, said—

"You promise and swear that you will preserve an eternal silence respecting everything you have heard or seen in the Inquisition, and respecting the time or manner of your imprisonment there; that you will never speak of this tribunal or its ministers except with profound respect.

"If, therefore, any trait of raillery should escape from your lips against this sacred Institution, you may probably repent of it; for, in whatever city, town, borough, or other place in Spain, you may chance to be, there are officers who watch unceasingly over its interest, and who arrest, without distinction, every person who dares to speak of it with irreverence. Therefore take good care upon this point," continued the monk, "for if you unfortunately again fall into our hands, you will be punished as a relapse, and of course committed to the flames, without the interest even of the powerful protector to whom you are indebted for your present enlargement being able to save you. Take, therefore, the oath I demand of you, and retire to whatever place you please."

"But, my most reverend father," said I, "have the goodness, if you please, to return me my clothes and my portmanteau."

"Ah! my young friend," replied his reverence, as if he had been moved with compassion for my distress, "I pity you, and that is all you can receive from me.

The moment a person accused is confined in the prison of the Holy Office on a suspicion of magic, from that moment all his property is forfeited to the use of the king; and it is a rule of the spiritual law that confiscation is irrevocable. It is unfortunate for you; but you must console yourself by reflecting that the majority of the prisoners seldom escape, as you have done, only with the loss of their property."

This discourse convincing me that his reverence the Grand Inquisitor had no desire to release my portmanteau from his custody, I submitted with a good grace to the confiscation; and taking the oath upon the missal that I would never speak of those gentlemen, the conductors of the Holy Office, except with praise, I issued from their prisons almost naked; the doorkeepers of this infernal region, in order to have a share in my spoils, having, as I went out, taken from me the decent clothes I then had on, and given me in exchange an old black coat divested of its sleeves, which, from the singes yet apparent on many parts of it, was evidently the remains of the last covering of some unhappy victim who had been devoted to the flames.

CHAPTER XLIII.

VANILLO EXPRESSES HIS GRATITUDE TO DALFA AND BERNARDINA FOR PROCURING HIS ENLARGEMENT. THE CONSOLING RECEPTION HE MET WITH FROM THOSE LADIES, AND THE SECRET HE COMMUNICATED TO THEM IN RETURN.

I FELT such a sense of shame from the miserable condition in which I appeared on my departure from the prison of the Inquisition, that I sought refuge in a neighbouring church, which, thank Heaven, was quite empty, where, concealing myself behind a tomb, I awaited the approach of night; and the moment it arrived, I flew to the house of my fair benefactors. But, alas! so far were they from immediately recollecting me under my present disguise, that they felt a temporary alarm, until further observation brought me to their minds, when they instantly burst into loud and repeated fits of laughter.

"I am happy to find, ladies," said I, "that the prison uniform pleases you."

"Why, yes," replied Bernardina, who was still a lively laughing girl; "and we are particularly pleased with your waistcoat; it gives you a gallant air; but it is a great pity that it smells so strongly of the *auto-da-fe*."

"It is," replied I, "a present which I received from the prison guards, in exchange for a good suit of clothes which they stripped from my shoulders."

The ladies, having indulged their mirth, assumed

a serious air, and expressed the pain they had felt at my confinement. "We experienced additional mortification," said they, "inasmuch as we, having persuaded you to sell your lotion and pomade, were the original cause of it."

"Ladies," replied I, "if you did innocently lead me into alarming danger, you have in recompense happily released me from it. It has cost me, it is true, all that I was worth; but I am accustomed to the caprices of fortune."

"My niece and I," replied the aunt, "sincerely wish that we were sufficiently rich to offer you more than you have lost; but, however limited our circumstances are, we have at least enough to place you in the same situation as when you first became acquainted with the Grand Inquisitor."

Signora Dalfa, when she spoke in this style, conceived that this judge had only rifled me of the presents I had received for embellishing the patients they had procured me; for I had never spoken one word either to her or her niece of my uncle's ducats.

"Madam," replied I, "this is carrying generosity too far, and I should abuse your kindness if I were to accept of"—

"For shame, Gonzales," interrupted Bernardina, with an impulse which discovered the goodness of her heart; "does it become you to be ceremonious with your friends? You shall live with us. We can provide you with a small apartment, where you will not be badly accommodated; and you shall share our table and our purse."

This proposal was made to me so graciously, that I could not avoid accepting of it; besides, it was not

convenient for a man with such a singed jacket as mine to refuse so kind an offer. I accordingly became a boarder with my female friends, with whom I sat down to supper, dressed as I was. My burlesque habit, indeed, instead of being offensive, became the subject of much occasional merriment, and inspired them with pleasantries which heightened the excellency of the repast. It will easily be conceived that the Holy Inquisition was not spared by my lively friends; and I must confess that I even forgot the recent oath I had taken on the sacred missal, while a variety of sarcastic observations escaped from me on the proceedings of that tribunal; but, suddenly recollecting myself, I put the seal of silence on my lips, to the great entertainment of my fair friends: "Hush, Vanillo, hush; recollect that you have promised to speak nothing but in praise of these gentlemen, whatever cause you may have had to consider them in the light of Barbary corsairs, or otherwise to complain of their conduct." So high, indeed, were my spirits and good-humour during supper, that the loss of my portmanteau seemed a matter of perfect indifference; my heart, however, sensibly felt this misfortune, and I could not recollect it without sending every inquisition on the face of the earth to the devil.

Having entertained ourselves for some time at table, each of us retired to our respective apartments. I found in mine a comfortable bed, instead of a cold truss of straw like that I had lain on in prison; and the richness of the furniture corresponded to the goodness of the bed: everything in the apartment, indeed, did great honour to the

taste of Count Medellin. Having viewed the several articles with pleasure, I undressed myself, a ceremony which was very speedily performed, and went to bed, in hope of making only one nap during the night; but contrary to my expectation, and as if the bed had not been made to sleep on, I never closed my eyes until a quarter of an hour before the break of day, when, falling into a profound repose, I did not awake until long after the sun had risen.

About nine o'clock in the morning the door of my chamber opened, and Signora Dalsa, attended by three men, two of whom carried bundles of clothes, entered the room. "Signor Gonzales," said the lady, "here is the most fashionable tailor in Madrid, who will show you a variety of habits which you will try on." Having uttered these words, she retired, in order that I might be more at liberty; and the tailor and his attendants, without further ceremony, opened their packets and displayed five or six new and rich suits of clothes quite complete, and each, in regular degrees, more superb than the other. There was one which particularly pleased me, and I chose it, less from its magnificence, rich as it was, than because it appeared to have been made on purpose for me, so very nicely did it fit me. The tailor also furnished me with a sword, a caster hat, silk stockings, shoes, shirts, and every other article of dress; all by the order and expense of my lovely benefactors, who, notwithstanding everything that I said to the contrary, forced me, in addition to these presents, to accept a purse of fifty doubloohs. Perfectly satisfied with what their table afforded, and with the comfortable lodging they had provided me

with, I requested they would stop there, and permit me to depend upon my own care and industry for the rest.

"Why, truly," replied Bernardina; "it depends entirely upon yourself to gain twenty times as much as you have lost. Continue the sale of your lotion and pomade; that is all you have to do."

"Egad!" interrupted I, "I shall be very cautious how I take up that trade again. The same envy which has already pointed me out to the attention of the Holy Office will not fail to place me again in its hands; and you know in what manner they will proceed against a relapse accused of sorcery."

"Your fears are just," replied the aunt; "relinquish this profession to our management; my niece and I will conduct it for you with so much secrecy and address, that you shall taste the sweets of it without incurring the smallest risk. Teach us to compound these antidotes to age and ugliness, and, without any further trouble, you shall receive one-third of the profits."

I did not long hesitate to enter into a copartnership so beneficial to myself; and, without further delay, I not only gave them the prescription of Potoschi, specifying all the necessary ingredients of the composition, but instructed them in the art by which they were compounded—an art they acquired with astonishing facility, so much had they the work at heart.

After employing five or six days upon this subject, and having well instructed them, they assured me I might leave it hereafter to their own management. "It is now our business," said Signora Dalfa, "to labour for the general benefit of our snug concern."

"Yes," replied the niece, "we will now exonerate you from all further trouble, and will dispose of our production without your appearing in the business, and render you a faithful account of the profits. While we are busy, you may take your pleasure, enjoy the company of friends, frequent with them the fashionable circles of the capital, or visit the theatre as a dramatic critic; in short, you may pass your time in the manner most agreeable to your inclination; and, if you choose to return to your hotel, we will not even insist on your residing with us."

"Ladies," replied I, "let us speak candidly to each other upon this subject. It seems to me to be absolutely necessary that we should have separate dwellings, and even that we should not be seen to have any connection. I shall take occasional opportunities of visiting you in the evenings. With these precautions we shall dispose of our merchandise without anxiety, and elude the care and vigilance of my enemies, who, without doubt, will watch my conduct."

My associates approved of my advice, and we accordingly agreed to separate; they in the resolution of readorning faces injured by time, and I charmed with the prospect of deriving a large revenue from the traffic, without the danger of being thought a party concerned.

CHAPTER XLIV.

VANILLO RETURNS TO HIS HOTEL—THE CONVERSATION HE HAS WITH HIS HOST, AND THE JOY HE FELT ON MEETING WITH HIS FORMER FRIEND FERRARI—THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH RESULTED FROM THIS RE-NEWAL OF THEIR ACQUAINTANCE.

ON quitting the hospitable roof of my fair associates I directed my steps towards my old mansion, that is, towards my hotel. My host, on seeing me, conceived it was my apparition. "Is it really you, Gonzales?" exclaimed he, with astonishment.

"It is I myself, my dear Andresillo," replied I, embracing him. "You did not expect that I should so speedily return, did you?"

"No, by my faith," replied he, "I did not. The Holy Inquisition, which I take to be the most wicked of the three wicked holies of Spain, does not, in general, relinquish its prey very soon. To tell you the truth, I thought you irredeemable."

"Ah! why so?" replied I; "are not the judges of this holy tribunal as just as they are enlightened? Was I not certain of being liberated the moment my innocence appeared?"

"Oh yes!, certainly," replied Andresillo; "but have they also liberated your effects? That is the question here."

"Hush, hush, my friend," replied I, putting my finger to my mouth. "Do not, I beg of you, mention a subject which may induce me to violate a silence which I must maintain for the remainder of my life.

It is not," added I, "that I am not thoroughly persuaded I might open my mind to you without restraint."

"Oh, that you may with perfect safety, I assure you," replied he; "I am a discreet man, and, more than that, I am your friend; besides, whatever bad you may tell me of those gentlemen, I shall still think worse. I once knew," continued Andresillo, who was rather disposed to chatter—"I once knew a very honest gentleman who was confined three years in their prisons without knowing why; and, as he continued to assert his innocence, he was condemned to the flames; but on the evening of the day appointed for his execution, the dreadful preparations which were made for his punishment appalled his mind, and, contrary to the testimony of his conscience, he confessed himself guilty in order to save his life; but it did not save his large property from confiscation, or himself from being sent for five years to the galleys."

Andresillo was in too good a train of talking against the Holy Office to stop here, and he made me endure the recital of five or six other histories, to the praise and glory of this noble institution, until at length I was obliged to interrupt him, in order to inquire whether he knew what was become of my valet.

"I cannot," said he, "give you the least information of him; all I know is that, alarmed at your detention, he thought it prudent to decamp, and, to assist his flight, he took away your mule; in doing which he only anticipated the Holy Office; for, the moment after his departure, a familiar, big with expectation, came and demanded it. You see from this circumstance that these officers are very eager after

their prey, and will let nothing escape them; and I am greatly surprised," added he, "that they have let you out with such good clothes on your back; they do not in general behave so handsomely to their prisoners."

"My friend," said I, "these clothes have been bought since I was released; those which I had on when I fell into their hands were as good, but the doorkeepers of the Holy Office thought proper to appropriate them before they let me out."

Andresillo, on hearing these words, laughed incessantly for a quarter of an hour, but I, who did not feel there was anything pleasant in the circumstance, desired him to change the discourse. "Never," said I, "let this Holy Inquisition be again the subject of our conversation. I have a deep interest to preserve upon this subject. I intend to continue my abode with you," added I; "are my apartments vacant?"

"They are," replied my host; "you will find them exactly in the same state in which you left them."

"Have you as much evening company as you used to have?" inquired I.

"More than ever," answered Andresillo. "You will see a great number of new faces."

"It is the very thing I wish for," said I; "it will afford me infinite pleasure; for there is nothing delights me more than a change of scenes."

The same evening, indeed, I sat down to supper with many gentlemen who were unknown to me, and with one that I well knew, but whom I did not immediately recollect. It was Ferrari, the Italian gentleman, whose friendship had induced me to accompany him from Leghorn to the seat of his nativity at Pisa,

where I resided for some time, until I found that I made one too many in his family.

Ferrari, struck with my features, as I was with his, approached me the moment supper was over with open arms. "Signor Gonzales," said he, "permit me, after so long a separation, sincerely to embrace you."

Receiving him with equal cordiality, we interchanged with each other a thousand civilities, after which Ferrari, changing the style of conversation, told me he had much information to give me; and, as we were not in a convenient place to discuss subjects of a private nature, desired I would do him the favour to meet him on the Prado the ensuing morning at nine o'clock. I promised to meet him there at the appointed hour, assuring him that his desire to have a private conservation, great as it might be, could not exceed my own. Upon this we took leave of each other, I retiring to my old apartments, and he to a ready-furnished lodging in the neighbourhood.

The ensuing morning, eager as I was to meet him on the Prado, I was not the first there. Ferrari was waiting for me. After repeating mutual professions of friendship, "Gonzales," said he, "I know the secret cause of your departing so abruptly from Pisa; the lovely Engracia disclosed it to me with her dying breath."

"How!" interrupted I with equal surprise and precipitation; "is Engracia dead?"

"She died," replied Ferrari, "about two years ago in childbed; and her infant soon afterwards followed its mother. 'My dear husband,' said she, while she embraced me for the last time, 'among other parts of my conduct for which, perhaps, I have occasion

to solicit your forgiveness, is the story by which I induced you to believe that your friend Gonzales had betrayed your confidence and attempted to seduce my virtue. The whole of it was fabrication ; he never dishonoured, in any way that I know of, the friendship that you afforded him ; it was I who feigned the tale, in order to banish from my sight the painful presence of a man who seemed to possess so much of your esteem ; but I feel, at this awful moment, a deep contrition for the injustice I have done upon this occasion ; and if, hereafter, chance should cause you to meet again, I charge you to obtain for me, if possible, his forgiveness."

"Oh ! I pardon her from the bottom of my heart," replied I, smiling. "Jealousy is natural to the sex. The only regret I feel is that it deprived me for a time of your inestimable friendship."

"True it is," replied Ferrari, "the account my wife gave me of your perfidy inflamed my feelings to the highest pitch of indignation ; and, therefore, you will easily believe me when I assure you that I felt the deepest sorrow for the loss of your friendship the moment I was undeceived."

"I am already acquainted," replied I, "with the imposition which was practised on you. About eight weeks subsequent to my banishment from Pisa, I met your wife's confidential servant, Spinetta, at Florence, and she told me in the same breath of her having quitted the service, and of the trick her mistress had used to drive me from your house. The lovely deceiver, however, has been punished too severely for so venial an offence. I sincerely lament her premature death, and freely forgive her."

I then inquired of Ferrari whether he was again married, or remained a widower.

"Remarried!" exclaimed he with surprise. "No, I shall hereafter live single. The condition of a widower is more convenient than that of a husband. I regret the loss of Engracia; but I feel no temptation to marry again."

"You astonish me," cried I; "why adopt such sentiments? What is it that has thus prejudiced you against the marriage state? You perhaps think the loss of Engracia irreparable."

"No," replied Ferrari; "I think, if I were inclined to seek a second union, I might easily find a companion equally agreeable even with Engracia; but, between ourselves, a husband has so many duties to fulfil, that it becomes inconvenient to a man who loves his liberty. Engracia and I loved each other with mutual fondness; but still there was always something wanting to make me happy. Disposed by nature to conviviality, I now feel myself at liberty to enjoy the company and conversation of my friends without restraint; but while I was fondly attached to Engracia, every moment of my life was anxiously devoted to please her alone. Perhaps," added he, "you think differently on this subject; perhaps I may now be speaking to a man who is at this moment actually linked in the bands of matrimony, and possesses a wife who is the idol of his heart."

"No," replied I; "I am still a bachelor. Once, indeed, I had a fancy to marry, but my happy stars prevented me from committing that folly; and I have had no temptation since to quit a single life."

These sentiments seemed to afford satisfaction to

Ferrari. "I rejoice," said he, "to find such a uniformity in our dispositions. It shall not be my fault if we do not hereafter continue friends. Will you once more trust yourself under my roof? I have quitted my residence at Pisa, and exchanged the pleasures of Italy for those of Spain. My aunt, who formerly lived at Montreal, is dead. She bequeathed to me, among other property, a comfortable villa near Burgos, of which I took possession about fifteen months ago, and on which I now entirely reside. I have the happiness to possess the society of three or four very agreeable neighbours; and if you will afford us your company, you will greatly contribute to increase the pleasure we enjoy."

The proposal which this gentleman made to me, I should probably have declined to accept of, if I had been still in the possession of my valuable portmanteau; but, in the condition to which the Holy Office had reduced me, I considered Ferrari's offer as an advantage of which prudence compelled me to accept; besides, after what I had experienced, I was not sorry to absent myself from Madrid, at least for some time. I accordingly promised Ferrari that I would return with him to Burgos. "All I fear, my friend," said I, "is, that you may once more take a fancy for matrimony, and that your second wife may, like the first, prove fatal to our friendship."

"Oh!" replied he, "you have nothing to apprehend on that subject. I am sick of wives. The reluctance I entertain to matrimony will prevent me from taking any woman as a wife. Bright as female charms may appear to shine around the character of any particular female, I shall never suffer my mind

to be so dazzled by them as to imagine her entirely faultless. Spots are discoverable even in the sun. Where is the woman to be found who is perfectly good-tempered, and entirely free from whim? Beautiful appearances ought to induce the most distrust; for they frequently conceal the greatest defects. Engracia, for example, my adored wife Engracia, appeared, when I married her, to possess angelic mildness. The winning softness of her manners charmed me; but, ceasing soon to follow the restraints which had adorned her character, she discovered a disposition naturally impetuous and violent; and, worse than all the rest, became, whenever she was contradicted, a little devil. In short, it was Engracia who caused my feelings to revolt against the state of matrimony; and, therefore, you may rely with confidence upon my assurance, that the torch of Hymen will never again light me to the altar."

"The confidence which these sentiments excite," said I, "prevent any further hesitation. I am ready to depart whenever you please."

"I shall leave Madrid immediately," replied my friend; "I visited the metropolis merely to behold the court of a Catholic king; and, having seen and admired its magnificence, my curiosity is satisfied. A carriage and three excellent mules await my orders at the hotel where I lodge; and to-morrow, if agreeable, we will proceed to Burgos."

"With all my heart," replied I, "provided you have no objection to permit a person who has but recently escaped from the prisons of the Holy Office, to become your companion."

Ferrari started back with horror as I uttered these words. "What do you say?" cried he. "O Heavens! explain yourself immediately. Have you had the misfortune to behold the horrible dungeons of the Holy Inquisition?"

"I was there not long ago," replied I; "but I shall remember them while life exists."

"And what occasion," replied he, "could you have given to that tribunal to arrest you? Do me the favour to relate to me the particulars of this adventure."

Ferrari listened to the faithful narrative which I gave of this transaction with extreme attention; sometimes exhibiting emotions of pity and indignation, and at others bursting into laughter, from which it was impossible he should refrain. Having concluded, "I should have found this history rather entertaining," said he, "if your portmanteau had been restored; but what could you expect? Confiscation is the primary object of every inquisition. You would not have been better treated by our Italian tribunals. After such a disaster, you will feel great consolation in quitting Madrid."

"I shall make no further objection to bear you company," said I. "I wish we were now at Burgos, where, not being known by any person, I shall run no risk of having the finger of scorn pointed at me as I walk along."

CHAPTER XLV.

VANILLO TAKES LEAVE OF HIS TWO ASSOCIATES, SIGNORA DALFA AND BERNARDINA, AND GOES FROM MADRID TO BURGOS.

CAREFUL, as you will easily conceive, not to leave Madrid without bidding adieu to my associates, I paid them a visit in the dusk of the evening, and informed them that, having accidentally met an old friend who was inclined to take me with him to Burgos, we had agreed to set off early on the ensuing morning.

"Ah," replied Signora Dalfa, "your mind, I perceive, is continually alarmed. Your fears, however, are without foundation; you might remain in Madrid with perfect safety, and enjoy its pleasures with ease and affluence. But I am conscious all the eloquence I possess would be vainly exerted in attempting to dissuade you from this unnecessary flight. Indulge, therefore, these fears. Repair to Burgos, or to any other place you please, and assure yourself, that in whatever quarter of the globe you may reside, we will render you a faithful account of all the profits of our copartnership."

Bernardina confirmed the promise of her aunt, and insisted on advancing me, until the joint fund should accumulate, a hundred pistoles on account. Thanking my fair friend for this kind accommodation, and interchanging reciprocal professions of friendship and esteem, I returned to the hotel to sup with

Ferrari, who desired me, when we parted, to hold myself in readiness to depart early on the ensuing morning—a request with which I did not fail to comply; and, just as the morning sun was beginning to shoot his beams above the horizon, an elegant carriage, drawn by two fine mules, driven by a postillion, and attended by a valet on a third mule, appeared at the gate, in which we deposited a large trunk containing Ferrari's clothes, and a small cloak-bag enclosing the linen that the ladies had presented to me, and proceeded towards Burgos. We slept the first night at Paular, the second at Aranda, and the third at Valladolid; where we continued two days, to behold a city which had been so frequently honoured by the residence of royalty; and, on the fifth day afterwards, happily arrived at the villa of Ferrari, which was situated about a quarter of a mile from Burgos, near the plains of Honoria.

The villa of Ferrari, if it offered nothing superb to the view, convinced the observer, at least, that it was not in Chancery; for its condition was excellent; and, what pleased me better, the estate belonging to it had the reputation of producing to its owner six thousand ducats a year. The inside was perfectly correspondent to its external appearance; the furniture and other ornaments, though not magnificent, were elegant, and of the best kind. The gardens and ornamented pleasure-grounds were situated in the middle of a park sufficiently extensive to afford even the amusements of the chase. A spot better suited to the then disposition of my mind could not have been selected; for, although I had no reason any longer to dread the Inquisition, I felt, from time

to time, in spite of all my endeavours to suppress the painful apprehensions, as if familiars were continually at my heels. I lived, in short, the life of a hare. Suppressing, however, the perturbation of my mind, I assumed a gay and easy manner, and by this means rendered myself agreeable to all Ferrari's friends. Among others, there were two gentlemen who, though they possessed very opposite characters, were particularly partial to me, and I confess that I was equally pleased with them. Both these gentlemen, Don Sebastian de Rodillas and Don Mathias de Grajal, resided in the vicinity of Burgos, and were nearly of the same ages, that is, from thirty-five to forty, rich in honour, and poor in wealth. Living upon the produce of their small estates, they supported, by good management and economy, the characters of gentlemen with equal decency and pride. Unable to treat their friends sumptuously, they contrived to supply the deficiencies of luxury by the more refined pleasures of the intellect, and were men of high spirit and agreeable conversation. Don Sebastian possessed a talent of writing songs, and setting them himself to music; and Don Mathias had the happy art of relating anecdotes and telling stories in a way exquisitely lively and humorous. It was impossible, in short, to be dejected in their company. Ferrari, however, who was extremely happy in having two such gentlemen for his neighbours, generally entertained us at his own house, though we sometimes visited them.

One day, while we were dining at Don Sebastian's house, a young man, with a large pilgrim's staff in his hand, his clothes all torn, and his beard long and

black, entered the room. The sight of him immediately brought my *soutie* from the Inquisition, in my singed jacket, to my recollection ; but Don Sebastian, notwithstanding his appearance, no sooner observed him, than he exclaimed, " Heavenly God ! it is my brother, Don Joachim ; I know him in spite of his tattered clothes and unshaven beard."

" Yes, my brother," replied the young man, " it is Don Joachim who stands before you ; but do not be surprised at seeing me in this condition. A poor devil who returns from Barbary after a captivity of five years, cannot well make a better appearance."

" Whatever may be the cause of your deplorable situation," replied Don Sebastian, " I return my thanks a thousand and a thousand times to Heaven for restoring you to my arms."

In uttering these words, he rose with transports from the table to embrace his brother, who, on his side, showed the correspondent joy which overwhelmed his heart.

When the fond transports of fraternal affection had in some degree subsided, Don Sebastian presented Don Joachim to Ferrari, to Don Mathias, and to myself. We saluted him with cordiality ; and, on congratulating him on his return to Burgos, soon discovered, from the answers he made to our congratulations, that he was by no means deficient in understanding.

On his taking his seat at the table, we expected to behold a famished traveller, who would have eagerly devoured the victuals with which it was covered ; but, on the contrary, he preserved the greatest temperance, and scarcely ate three mouthfuls.

Ferrari, astonished at this circumstance, said to him, "For a man who appears to have travelled far, I wonder you have not a better appetite."

"It is true," said Don Sebastian; "I have been observing it with surprise."

"My dear brother," replied Don Joachim, "you must attribute it to the joy I feel at this moment in seeing you again—a moment which I have so long and so ardently desired."

"A moment," replied Don Sebastian, "which I also have long and ardently wished for. It is now seven years since you departed from this house to go to Compostella, with an intention to perform at the shrine of its tutelary saint the vow you made during your dangerous illness; and since that day I have never heard of you. What prevented your return? What have you been doing during this long interval? From what place did you last come?"

"From Algiers," replied Don Joachim; "that city so fatal to Christians, and which may be justly styled the abode of cruelty. I have, however, drunk less from the bitter cup of adversity than many others, as you will perceive when I have an opportunity of relating to you the circumstances of my story."

"You may speak without reserve before these gentlemen," said Don Sebastian.

"Yes," replied Don Mathias, "you are now in the retreat of friendship. Relate to us the history of your adventures. You cannot have an audience more interested in your happiness."

"I will then," replied Don Joachim, "relate to you the extraordinary circumstances of my captivity."

And he immediately began in the following manner:—

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE HISTORY OF DON JOACHIM DE RODILLAS.

WHILE I was proceeding to the shrine of the saint to fulfil my vow, I overtook, upon the frontiers of Galicia, a young pilgrim of nearly the same age with myself, who was going to Compostella with the like intention. Politely saluting each other, we engaged in conversation with all the unsuspecting confidence of youth; and, after acquainting him that I came from Burgos, and learning in return that he was a native of the Asturias de Santellana, we reciprocally communicated to each other the objects of our journey, and agreed to perform the pious ceremony together. Proceeding accordingly to the shrine of St. Jacques, we fulfilled our respective vows, and accompanied each other back on the same road we had travelled, with an intention of returning to our several homes. On our arrival at Porta-Ferrada, it became necessary to take different routes; but a certain sympathy had linked our hearts so strongly together that we had not resolution to part. "I cannot tell," said my young companion, "whether you feel any reluctance to separate, but I must candidly confess that the idea of parting gives me great pain."

I assured my companion that I could make the same declaration with equal sincerity; that his polite manners and lively conversation had won my heart; and that I felt a deeper sorrow at the idea of losing his agreeable company than I was able to express.

"If that be the case," replied he, "there can be no reason why we should bid each other adieu. Let us still enjoy the pleasure of each other's company, and make an excursion together through Spain. Come, let us unite our fortunes and indulge a truant disposition; the natural levity of youth will excuse this frolic to our families."

A proposal which opened to me the prospect of enjoying the company of a friend and indulging the curiosity of my mind, was not, as you will readily conceive, very disagreeable to me; and I told the young Asturian that I would instantly accede to it if I had been better supplied with those pecuniary resources which such a scheme would unavoidably require; that I was unfortunately dependent on the bounty of an elder brother, who, being born four or five years before me, was in possession of the family estate, and had given me but a scanty supply for the purpose of my then expedition; and that I had only three pistoles left to carry me back to Burgos.

"My finances," replied the Asturian, "would have been in a condition equally low if I had merely trusted to the generosity of the old miser, my father; but, apprehensive that I might want more money than he might think proper to supply me with, I prudently took care to provide myself with an additional sum, by secretly purloining from his hoards a purse containing fifty doubloons; and, by the assistance of this fund, we shall be enabled to reach Salamanca, where we shall have leisure to consider of the measures it may be most advisable for us to take in further prosecution of our design."

Blamable as the conduct of the Asturian certainly

was, I could not help applauding his precaution; and immediately determining to prosecute our wild project, we directed our course towards Salamanca. I am at a loss to guess why we preferred this city to any other, if it was not on account of its university, which we had frequently heard of and wished to see. On arriving at Salamanca, we hired apartments at a fashionable hotel, where my companion sent for a tailor, to rid him of his pilgrim's garment, and to furnish him with the dress of a cavalier in the style of that which I then wore. We also purchased linen and other articles for our immediate use. These disbursements occasioned a melancholy decrease in our funds; but, in lieu of money, we had the satisfaction to see ourselves equipped in the style of two young noblemen; and, after staying four days to see everything worthy of observation in this city, we hastily took our leave, and on the ensuing morning directed our course, Capuchin fashion, towards Madrid, to judge for ourselves whether the magnificence of the Spanish court equalled the superb idea we had conceived of it; each of us carrying by turns, on our shoulders, the cloak-bag which contained our linen. Just as we were entering the village of Alda Luenga, we heard a jingling of bells behind us, which we found proceeded from three mules which a muleteer was conducting, and two of which were unoccupied. When the muleteer came near us, we asked him where he was going. "To Madrid," said he. "And how much will you take," said I, "to convey two young truants who are short of cash?"

"Masters," replied the muleteer, "you shall give me what you please. Two of my mules are empty,

and I have no objection to your taking advantage of it." We accordingly mounted the mules, and proceeded to Villaflor, on the borders of Old Castile, where we slept.

Our first care, on entering the inn, was to order a good supper; and the host conceiving that we were enabled to pay well, executed our orders with great alacrity. When supper was ready, we were so satisfied with the behaviour of the muleteer, that we insisted on his partaking of the treat; and we all sat down to a ragout of rabbits, which I tasted at first with some reluctance, apprehending it might be made of some other animal; but the muleteer pledged himself for the host's honesty, and upon his warranty we ate unnuiseated, as if we had been famished. The ensuing morning we continued our journey in the same manner, and arrived the day after at Madrid, where the young Asturian presented the muleteer with a double pistole for our conveyance; but, muleteer as he was, he generously refused it, saying, "he could not think of taking money from gentlemen who had treated him so handsomely on the road."

Quitting this disinterested mule-driver, and inquiring for the court-end of the town, we went, according to the directions we received, to a hotel of elegant appearance, the master of which showed us himself to the apartments he allotted us; and, you may easily conceive, that, as we were without servants or equipage, they were not the best in the house; they were neat, however, and sufficiently commodious to satisfy persons much more difficult than we were.

The host, curious to learn who we were, inquired, while he bowed and begged pardon for taking so great a liberty, into our motives for visiting Madrid; and no sooner was he told that we had come merely to gratify a desire we had long felt to see this first city in the world, than he exclaimed, "God be thanked, my noble young gentlemen, you have good reason to call it so, for there is no place comparable to Madrid; besides, the Catholic sovereigns generally choose it for their residence. Yes," continued he with enthusiasm, "the royal palace alone, and the marvellous things it contains, deservedly brings travellers to admire them from all the extremities of the globe. You will be charmed, for instance, when you behold the Arsenal, which is one hundred paces long; the wardrobes of Charles the Fifth, and his successors, the three Philips; you cannot conceive the quantities of gold and silver arms which are there preserved, together with pistols, darts, and horse-trappings of various kinds; but, above all, you will be enchanted when you see the six men on horseback covered with emeralds, which Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, presented to Philip the Second. If there were nothing else in Madrid worthy of your observation, you will not regret your journey."

The host, who loved to be talking, having described to us all the curiosities of Madrid, intimated that it was near supper-time, and we desired him to roast a partridge and a young rabbit as soon as possible. He not only executed this order with great expedition, but waited on us himself during the repast, and obliged us to listen to a tedious description of the beauties of the city and its surrounding territory; in which, deficient

as he was of the talent of embellishing the objects he attempted to paint, he did not fail to excite our impatience to behold these wonders of the world.

The ensuing day had scarcely dawned when we arose from our beds, and dressing ourselves with as much haste as if we had not a moment to lose, we issued from the hotel with eager curiosity and proceeded to hear mass at the church of our Lady of Almudena, so called from the statue of a saint which is said to have been brought from the Holy Land by St. James of Compostella. We next visited the market-place, celebrated by the battles of the bull which are there exhibited ; and, struck by the magnificence of the buildings which surround it, we stopped to examine with attention the Consistorio, or palace, which the King occupies when he is present at the games. This royal edifice and the other superb structures which surround it, prepossessed our minds so warmly in favour of the capital of the monarchy, that every object excited admiration.

“ What superb buildings ! ” cried my comrade, stopping at every noble mansion we passed. “ I perceive we are not now in a provincial town ; observe those shops, what immense riches they contain ! and the traders, how grave they appear ! Do you not perceive in them a dignified demeanour which the merchants of other places do not possess ? They have the air of Roman citizens.”

After passing a month in traversing the different quarters of this immense metropolis,—sometimes visiting the most celebrated churches and examining their respective curiosities ; sometimes walking in the park of Buen Retiro, which is filled with ostriches, cameleons,

bears, and other aerial and terrestrial animals ; attending almost every morning the royal levee, where the prepossessions of our mind attributed to certain great men a degree of respectability which nature had refused,—the contents of our purse were so nearly exhausted that we began to be seriously uneasy.

Our inquietude, however, was not of long duration ; for, being informed that government was upon the point of sending recruits to Lombardy, we immediately adopted the gallant resolution to serve the King ; the Asturian rather choosing to take this course than to return home and endure the reproaches and, perhaps, even the cruel treatment of his father ; and I feeling no inclination to quit the company of a friend who was become so agreeable to me. Determined, therefore, to try our fortunes in the fields of war, we procured the address of the commanding officer, whose name was Don Pompeio Torbellino, and whose martial mien bespoke him a man who had seen hard service. Torbellino received us very graciously ; and the moment he heard we had resolved to devote our lives to the service of the state, he exhibited as lively a joy as if we had been veterans crowned with victory. " My young friends," said he, " I am glad to find you in possession of these heroic sentiments ; you appear to be gentlemen of birth and family. To such noble characters as you are the road of glory is principally opened. On you it is that the monarchy relies for its best support ; you cannot begin too early the noble profession of arms."

The recruiting officer having made this harangue, gave us ten pistoles each, made us sign our enrolment, and then told us we must be ready to depart

in three days for Barcelona, where two transports were lying to convey us, with other soldiers lately levied, to Italy. So far were we from regretting our enrolment, that we congratulated each other on the measure; and when the day of our departure arrived, we marched gaily towards Barcelona, in company with nearly five hundred other young men, all eager to support the honour of our king and country; sleeping contentedly at night in barns and outhouses, on beds of straw, and eating heartily by day the rations of bread allowed for our support. The frugality of our meals did not interrupt the gaiety of our march; and, on our arrival at Barcelona, finding the transports ready, we immediately embarked, threatening, in acclamations of joy, vengeance against the enemies we were sailing to conquer. The winds continued favourable the whole of the voyage, and conveyed us to the port of Genoa, where we did not long remain, for we were instantly disembarked, and marched into the Milanese, to join the troops under the command of Count Monterey. The young Asturian and I were invested with the uniform of the regiment, and made extremely happy by being enrolled with each other in the same company.

You, no doubt, gentlemen, continued Don Joachim, expect to hear me relate some gallant victory gained over our enemies, but I have no such account to give you; for, besides serving under a general whose prudence degenerated into timidity, or, to express it better, who seemed to have received orders to avoid every opportunity of fighting, an accident happened which totally changed the nature of my situa-

tion. My companion, who was extremely fond of disputation, entered one day into an altercation with a soldier in the same regiment: the dispute terminated in a quarrel; and it was resolved to settle the difference two against two, at the point of the sword. The Asturian chose me for his second, and his adversary was attended by a young man of his acquaintance. We retired privately to the place appointed, where I endeavoured, by every effort in my power, to reconcile the parties; but, instead of pacifying their minds, I only irritated them more violently against each other, and we were obliged to begin the combat. A mortal thrust soon laid my friend dead at the feet of his adversary, a circumstance which raised my feelings to such a pitch of fury, that, after having killed my antagonist, I had the gratification of revenging the Asturian's death by running his victor through the heart.

The combat was scarcely over before three soldiers of the same regiment, who had entertained some suspicion of our design, appeared on the field of battle, with intent to prevent the mischief; but, perceiving they had come too late, they assisted me in burying the dead in a large hole which we found in the corner of an adjoining meadow, and returned with me to the camp, as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

This achievement, however, was soon rumoured through the regiment, and reaching the ear of the colonel of my regiment, he expressed a great desire to see me. Presenting myself before him in a firm but respectful manner, he appeared struck by my person and address. "Young man," said he, "your

appearance, and the care you take to conceal yourself, betrays your birth. Answer me sincerely. Are you not of noble extraction? Do not imagine that I mean to reproach you for having enlisted into the army. The condition of a common soldier cannot dishonour you, even if you are descended from the most illustrious family in Spain. Speak with confidence. From whence do you come, and who are your relations?"

Not feeling myself bound to create any mystery respecting my origin, I revealed my story with frankness and fidelity; and the colonel, who had listened to my tale with anxious attention, exclaimed, "I rejoice extremely in having discovered your character through its present disguise; I feel myself interested in your fortunes, and will take you under my protection."

I was about to express my gratitude, but he interrupted me. "Yes," continued he, "you may rely on being advanced the first vacancy."

The colonel, being related to the illustrious house of Ponce de Leon, was, of course, a man of the first distinction; and, congratulating myself on having gained so powerful a patron, I waited in silent expectation of being promoted from the condition of a common soldier to the rank of a subaltern officer.

The loss of my Asturian friend was soon supplied by another, whose agreeable talents, and particularly his great skill on the guitar, had gained my attention and esteem. This instrument he touched with such exquisite taste and happy execution, that he quite charmed all who heard him, especially when he accompanied it with his melodious voice. His merit

acquired him, throughout the whole army, the name of *the New Orpheus*. We attached ourselves closely to each other, and were almost continually together; and, as he perceived that my ear was good and my voice improvable, he instructed me so industriously in the science of music, and in the art of playing the guitar, that, at the end of six months, I became so great a proficient, that I began to acquire the attention of the soldiers, and to partake of the applauses they bestowed upon my master.

The Count de Monterey, our general, who, I have already noticed, was not prodigal of our blood, having continued inactive for ten months, received orders to send fifteen hundred of his troops back to Spain, to strengthen the army which was assembled at Aragon, under the command of the Marquis de Los Velos, for the purpose of preventing an expected insurrection in Catalonia, and I had the happiness to be one of those who were drafted for this expedition. We arrived at Rousillon, and joined, near Tortosa, the Spanish army, which consisted of fifteen thousand men.

Catalonia was already in a state of insurrection; but the Marquis de Los Velos attacking, with great violence, a large body of the insurgents, who had hoped success from their advantageous position, put them to flight, and penetrating with rapidity into the country, he determined to take Cambriel, a small town which the Catalans had hastily fortified as a depot for their arms and ammunition. The besieged resisted the summons to surrender in such firm and decisive terms, that we were obliged to open the siege in regular form. Erecting a strong battery of

cannon, we thundered, during five days and nights, against the walls, but, notwithstanding the demolition we occasioned, the rebels obstinately refused to surrender. The principal inhabitants, however, at length persuaded them to submit, which they did, but so incautiously, as not to make any terms of capitulation—a negligence of which we took a cruel and inhuman advantage, by entering the town with fury, and carrying everything before us with fire and sword. The charms even of beauty, the infirmities of old age, the smiles of innocence, or the weakness of infancy, were alike incapable of exciting in our breasts the slightest emotions of pity. But our senseless fury was not less fatal to the besiegers than to the besieged; for the inhabitants, irritated by our barbarity, and judging that they had no hope of quarter, flew to arms in the agonies of despair, and determined to sell their lives dearly to unfeeling foes, who seemed so thirsty after their blood and treasures.

My heart must have been torn by this afflicting scene, if the necessity I was under of defending myself had not concealed its horror from my observation. Fighting by the side of my colonel, his example animated my fury, and urged my arm to deal around its deadly blows with as little remorse as the rest. Covered with wounds, I at length received, while I was advancing in this bloody conflict, a severe blow on the head, which brought me to the ground, where I lay among the dying and the dead, until the besiegers, having glutted their vengeance by the destruction of every inhabitant, made the air re-echo to their acclamations of *Long live the King,*

when, raising my head, wounded as I was, and weltering in my blood, I joined in the chorus, by crying, in feeble and expiring accents, *Long—live—the—King.*

A few hours after the combat had closed, the wounded were separated from the dead, and sent to Salsona, whose inhabitants, not being connected with the insurgents of Barcelona, opened to us the doors of their hospitals. I had the good fortune to be placed under the care of a skilful surgeon, who soon effected my recovery, and the moment I found myself sufficiently strong, I returned to the camp.

So prompt a disposition to range myself under our victorious standard, continued Don Joachim, will, perhaps, make you imagine that I burned with impatience to perform some brilliant action, in order to advance myself in the service, but if you so imagine, you will be much deceived. The horrid impression which the siege of Cambriel had left upon my mind, instead of increasing my inclination for war, implanted, I assure you, a rooted hatred against it in my mind, and I determined to apply for my discharge.

The colonel, having seen me fight with a courage which excited his admiration, was greatly surprised at my request, and endeavoured by every means in his power to dissipate the terror which had struck my mind. "My young friend," said he, "you should attribute these weak feelings to your want of experience; for, after serving two or three campaigns, you will not only behold the bloodiest battles with calm indifference, but even feel a delight in carnage. Do not quit me, and I will promise you the first pair of colours which becomes vacant in the regiment."

"Sir," replied I, "you have too much kindness for me; confer this honourable employment on some cavalier more capable than I am of accommodating himself to the horrors of war, and suffer me to return to my native province to pass the remainder of my life in peace and tranquillity with my family."

"I will grant you your discharge," replied the colonel, "for I should be sorry to keep a soldier against his inclination. The King is too generous to require a service founded on restraint. Go; you have my permission to quit the service."

Having in this manner obtained my discharge, I retired towards the frontiers of Aragon, not without a fear of meeting, before I should arrive there, some straggling party of the insurgents, who, seeing me in the dress of a Spanish soldier, would not fail to make me feel their vengeance; but I happily passed undiscovered through Ebza, and reached the village of Calanda, where I stopped two days to repose, and on the third renewed my journey by the road which leads to Calatayud; but, unfortunately missing my way, on the approach of evening, in a place where no human habitation was to be found, I was obliged to pass the night in the open air.

This situation, indeed, was not extremely painful to a man who had so frequently been stationed on the night-picket guard; and extending myself on the grass near a sheltering bush, in a frame and temper of mind not very favourable to sleep, I endeavoured to beguile the tedious hours with a song; but while I was warbling my air, the sound of a guitar, which seemed to accompany my voice, struck my ear. To listen with more attention, I

remained for some time silent, but not hearing any sound, I concluded my ear had been deceived, and began to sing the same air again, when, to my utter astonishment, the same instrument seemed again to accompany my voice. Rising from the ground with great precipitation at this mystery, and, embarrassed as I was, apostrophising the harmonious spirit, I exclaimed with transport, "It must be my comrade, the New Orpheus, or the devil."

"I am not the devil," said a person, rising from the ground, on the other side of the bush, and running towards me with open arms; "I am your friend, who returns thanks to Heaven for having found his favourite pupil. By what accident is it that we thus meet? I thought you were dead, or courting death in the service of the King of Spain."

Giving a brief and candid account to my fellow-soldier of my dislike of, and dismission from, the army, it induced him to open his mind to me with equal candour; and he confessed that he had taken advantage of the tumult of the siege to desert from the army and to seek any means of support, however precarious, rather than continue to live by the trade of war. "I parted with my uniform," added he, "at Balvastro, to avoid the appearance of being a deserter; and I have since travelled very agreeably through many parts of Spain."

"That surprises me," replied I; "for it seems to me that, in order to travel agreeably, it is necessary to be well supplied with money, which I cannot conceive to be your case."

"This is the way," said he, "in which the world judges erroneously of men. Know, then, that my

guitar is my great resource. I play from village to village, and never close my concert without putting some handsome presents of money into my pocket. The ground is not generally my place of rest, I assure you; and it was entirely my own fault that it is so now. Indulging myself too long to-day after my dinner, I was surprised on my journey by the approach of night, and thought it more advisable to rest here than to travel any farther in the dark. I do not, however, lament the accident, since it has thus procured the pleasure of seeing you again; and, if you still retain your disposition to ramble through the various provinces of Spain, you may now conveniently indulge it by bearing me company. You already play on the guitar excellently well; a few more lessons will render you equal to myself; and you may safely rely on my assurances, that the profits of our concerts will be more than sufficient to defray all our travelling expenses."

I confess, gentlemen, continued young Rodillas, that I permitted myself to be led away by the music of my friend. On the ensuing morning, at the dawn of day, we quitted our lodgings, without being under any obligation to reckon with our host, and proceeded to Calatayud, where my companion purchased an excellent lute, and furnished me also with another suit of clothes, which I exchanged for my soldier's uniform, the less to endanger the safety of my old comrade, who, as I was no deserter, had much more to risk on this account than myself. Having taken these precautions, we repaired to the best inn in the town, and dined as men generally do who have neither eaten or drank for four-and-twenty hours.

The hostess, a lively brisk young widow, whose husband, an old man, had died about a year before, and whom she seemed to have entirely forgot, entered the room just as we had satisfied our famished appetites, and asked us, with hospitable civility, whether the ragoued fillet of veal, and the shoulder of mutton we had eaten, had pleased us.

"Extremely well," replied my comrade very coolly, "and the wine is excellent."

"As for the wine," said the widow, "I am sure it is the best batch in La Mancha; and I may venture to say, that even the King has not a bottle in his cellar more delicately flavoured."

"I do not doubt it," replied my companion with an air of raillery; "and I am much pleased with the good fortune which directed our steps to so comfortable an inn, where I shall willingly stay a long time if the inhabitants of the place have taste enough to admire our talents."

"Talents!" replied the young widow; "and pray what are your talents, gentlemen?"

"We are two musicians," replied he; "we sing tolerably well; play still better on our guitar; travel from town to town to show our parts; and live by these means in ease and plenty; but," continued he, "as you are not obliged to take our words, we must give you a specimen of our merit."

We accordingly took out our guitars, tuned them to each other, and played and sung for some time alternately. We had no occasion, on the conclusion of our performance, to ask the widow whether she was pleased with us.

"By St. Cecilia," cried she, "this is ravishing. I

no longer doubt whether you get anything by the use of your talents; you ought to get millions. The village of Calatayud will, I am sure, amply reward your merit; for its inhabitants are excessively fond of novelties. Certain Savoyards occasionally visit us, and these curious drolls return to their mountains loaded with *maravadis*."

"Madam," interrupted my companion hastily, "*silver* was coined for such sort of gentry who are only enabled to please the vulgar ear; but our talents are suited only to the noble and discerning few: we never exhibit except in the company of the great, and are never offered less than *gold*."

Impatient to discover whether we had any hope of a plentiful harvest at Calatayud, we went in the evening to the house of one of the principal inhabitants, and announced ourselves as two itinerant musicians who played with great excellency on the guitar. A large society of friends happening to assemble at the house, and everybody expressing a lively curiosity to hear us play, we were accordingly introduced to the company, to whom we addressed ourselves in such a way as to convince them we were not vagrants.

"Gentlemen," said the master of the house, "be pleased to exhibit a specimen of your art; but it is right to apprise you that you are in the presence of many exquisite masters of music."

"So much the better," cried I, "it is the very thing we wish;" and immediately taking my guitar, I played an air which I accompanied with my voice, and instantly received the unanimous applause of the whole assembly; some praising the exquisite softness

of my tones, and others the wonderful rapidity with which I touched the strings. "Gentlemen and ladies," said I, "if you are pleased with my performance, you will be in raptures with that of my companion. You have yet only heard the scholar; listen now to the master." And, in truth, the New Orpheus no sooner touched his instrument than he was interrupted by a general acclamation of applause. He indeed surpassed himself upon this occasion, and fully justified the name he had received. Having entertained the company for at least three hours, we placed the guitars on our shoulders as a token of intention to depart, when the master of the house, amidst reiterated praises, presented us, in testimony of the pleasure we had afforded him, with a purse of gold, the contents of which we immediately examined on our return to the inn, and were very agreeably surprised to find it contained twenty pistoles.

"Well, my friend," said my comrade, "what do you think of our success? You must not, indeed, expect so munificent a reward on every occasion. We should become rich too soon. We may, however, fairly flatter ourselves that money will not be wanting to defray the expenses of our expedition."

The success of this essay determined us to stay two or three days at Calatayud, being fully persuaded that more fish would come to our net; and, in effect, the two ensuing days so well warranted our conjecture by the compensations we received from a few opulent families, that we carried from Calatayud more money than was necessary for the purchase of mules, if we had chosen to ride; but, exclusively of the consideration that an equipage

might be troublesome, we were much better pleased, as our legs were not more than fifteen years of age, to walk on foot, than to be conveyed by any other means. We accordingly set out, and travelled on foot, by short stages, stopping at every town to offer our services to the principal inhabitants, and oftentimes even in the villages to please the rich farmers, who, the one as well as the other, were charmed with our voices and instruments; and if they did not bestow *doublons* upon us, we at least eased them of *ecus*; so that receiving twenty times more than we disbursed at the inns, our treasures accumulated every day.

I shall pass over in silence, continued Don Joachim, the towns, the hamlets, and the boroughs in which we tried our skill, to bring you immediately to the principal theatre of our exploits.

Strangers who distinguish themselves by any useful or agreeable talent are particularly honoured in the metropolis of Andalusia; and the moment it was circulated through the city that two celebrated performers on the guitar were arrived, we were overwhelmed with visitors, who, anxious to learn whether fame was right or wrong in boasting of our merits, came to us with entreaties to satisfy the curiosity they felt to hear us perform; and more especially those gentlemen who piqued themselves on playing the instrument with skill. Both descriptions of persons appeared equally delighted with our performances, which they acknowledged was such as appeared to refine the taste. Their admiration was inexhaustible. Many of them, in order to acquire our style of performing, became our pupils, and paid us well for the lessons they received.

Two months had already elapsed since our arrival at Seville, where we had accumulated vast sums of money, when discord shook its torch over our heads. What causes of displeasure I afforded to my companion I cannot conceive; but I began to perceive faults in his character which I had not before observed. Until this period we had always behaved to each other with sufficient complaisance; but even mutual civility were now at an end. Each was anxious to support his own opinions; and our differences, at first only contentions, ended at length in angry quarrels.

"Comrade," said I to the deserter, "nature, I perceive, has not formed us to live together; let us, however, part good friends."

"I was going to make you the same proposal," interrupted he with precipitation, "but you prevented me; let us divide the produce of our partnership, which now consists of four hundred pistoles, and each of us pursue what pleases him best."

Taking him at his word, we divided our profits, and bade each other an eternal adieu.

I congratulated myself on being released from such bad company, which in reality had never been pleasing to me. I had, indeed, frequently reproached myself for forming a connection with a deserter, and following a course of life so unworthy of my birth; but I was always satisfied by this self-condemnation, and could never acquire resolution to abandon such a companion.

The separation, however, having now taken place by mutual agreement, my mind speculated upon the subject of my future pursuits; and, after various reflec-

tions, I resolved to return to Burgos to the company of a brother, who, not knowing what was become of me, I fancied must have felt great trouble on my account. To accomplish this with greater expedition, I determined, as Burgos lies at a great distance by land from Seville, to travel by sea, if I could find any vessel ready to sail for the coast of Biscay; and, learning that one would depart for St. Andero early on the ensuing morning, I failed not to seize an opportunity so extremely favourable, St. Andero not being more than twenty leagues from Burgos. Embarking accordingly with about a dozen other passengers who were returning to Biscay and Navarre, we set sail, and, having doubled Cape St. Vincent, expected to make a passage, not only short, but pleasant; when a large vessel from Barbary immediately fell in with us, and summoned us to surrender without resistance, threatening to sink us to the bottom in case we refused, which we thought it proper to prevent by striking our colours and quietly submitting to be bound in chains. These marine robbers, as you will easily imagine, did not forget to search us individually from head to foot; and it was no small satisfaction to the pirate to find in my pocket a purse of one hundred doubloons. Joy sparkled in his eyes; and concluding from this circumstance that I was a person for whom he was likely to procure a large ransom, he affected to distinguish me from my unfortunate companions, whose pockets he had not found so richly furnished. He addressed his discourse particularly to me; and I had the satisfaction to find that the manner in which I answered him prepossessed him greatly in

my favour. Observing that I had a guitar by my side, he asked me whether I played the instrument. "Sir," replied I, "you shall judge for yourself, if you please."

"Well, slave," said he, "gratify my curiosity. Exhibit, exhibit." Accordingly, tuning my guitar, I played and sang to him with great gaiety, in spite of the heaviness of my heart.

The corsair appeared extremely well satisfied with my performance. "Captive," said he, "thank Heaven for the talents you possess. Your condition will not be the worse for them. On our arrival at Algiers I shall give you an employment in my family."

This ferocious robber, who had assumed the turban and taken the name of Peglin, was, in fact, a Spanish renegado from the province of Navarre. He had formerly commanded a privateer from St. Sebastian, and being discontented with the Spanish service, had attached himself to that of the republic of Algiers.

The nature of the employment which he designed to bestow on me I was quite at a loss to conjecture; but he made it known to me immediately on our arrival. "Captive," said he, "you have the happiness to please me, and as a mark of my approbation, I shall place my son Targut, who is now entering into his sixteenth year, under your care. Teach him the Castilian tongue; learn him at the same time to sing, and to play on the guitar; this is what I exact from you, and when you have accomplished these three points, be assured that my gratitude will exceed your expectation."

While I assured Peglin that I felt myself extremely

honoured by his commands, and that I would spare no endeavours on my part to accomplish his desires, the renegado called his son into his presence, and introduced him to me. I was by no means displeased with the person and manner of the youthful Algerine; and being informed that he spoke a little Spanish, I addressed him in that language, and I was convinced by his answer that he possessed both a liberal spirit and a good understanding. But although I was obliged to pass two or three hours every morning with him in his apartments, and as many every afternoon, Targut made but a slow and unpromising progress in his studies. As my enfranchisement, however, depended on my success, I did not suffer my mind to despair. On the contrary, I exerted myself to such a degree that, by inculcating the same lesson frequently on his mind, I at length rendered my instructions effectual. I taught him to sing at sight, and to play tolerably well on the guitar; but this was the work of four long years, and still I could not make him a proficient. Happily, his father, who was not an extraordinary connoisseur, conceiving him to be a perfect musician, congratulated me every day on my success, but without ever mentioning my promised liberty. My days passed unprofitably away in painful captivity, and would, I fear, have continued so to do for a much longer period, if an event had not happened in the family of the corsair, a description of which you cannot listen to without pleasure.

A young female, named Zeinabia, whom Peglin had captured in one of his enterprises, lived at this time in his house, and had become the idol of his heart. Confining her in a remote apartment, which

no one was permitted to enter but himself, he passed whole days with this unfortunate captive in endeavouring to render her sensible of his love. At the period of which I am now speaking, Zeinabia became suddenly ill, and all the ablest physicians of the country, who were immediately summoned to her assistance, after having exhausted their skill in vain endeavours to afford her relief, at length pronounced her disorder to be a consumption of such a kind as must inevitably be fatal to her life.

The distracted lover requested the physicians to describe to him the nature of this extraordinary complaint. "It is a complaint," replied the most celebrated of these sons of Hippocrates, "occasioned by a corrosive juice, which, mingling with the mass of the blood, dries up insensibly all the vital parts of the body until it causes death. A malady," added he, "extremely common in England, where many of both sexes yearly die of it; and it seems peculiar to that island, for I do not remember ever to have heard of a consumption either in Spain or Africa."

"My good doctors," replied the fond barbarian, alarmed by this discourse, "is there no remedy for this dangerous malady?"

"The faculty here know of none," replied they; "and death is in general the patient's sole relief."

The physicians, on saying this, retired, abandoning Zeinabia to Providence, and leaving Peglin in a state of painful consternation.

Touched by the excess of grief which he exhibited on this occasion, I approached him respectfully. "Master," said I, "the torments you feel pierce the heart of your slave with sorrow; and as the physicians

who ought to know the remedy for every disorder, have none for that which afflicts Zeinabia, permit me to try my skill for her relief. Her disorder appears to me to be nothing more than melancholy, which may be removed by exciting some emotion, so as to cause a dilatation of the heart. To produce this effect, suffer me to employ a means which has just occurred to my mind. Let me be permitted to visit Zeinabia's apartment, and try whether, by the highest melodies of my guitar, I cannot produce some sudden and salutary revolution in her mind."

"You have my permission," replied the corsair, "to try this expedient; but, alas! I entertain no great hopes of its success: it can, however, do no harm; and where no particular remedies are known, it is right to try experiments."

Preparing accordingly to perform the character of physician of a new kind, I fetched my guitar, and followed the corsair into the room where Zeinabia was confined. "Captive," said he to me, pointing to the lady, who lay reclined on a superb sofa of Chinese taffeta, "look attentively on that charming woman, and tell me if there are any torments equal to those I must feel, if death should snatch her from my arms."

"Sir," replied I, "you would indeed have reason to be disconsolate, but Heaven, that watches over and preserves the most beautiful of its works, will not deprive Zeinabia of life at the very commencement of her happiest days." Never, in truth, did my eyes behold an object more lovely than the face of this young captive.

Peglin, who was still more impatient even than

myself to see the effect of my skill, immediately made a sign to me to begin; and instantly sounding my voice, I sang a tender air, which I accompanied occasionally with the softest sounds of the guitar. Observing, however, that this species of music rather increased than diminished the languor of my patient, I suddenly changed the music to a gay, lively, and fantastic strain; and, as to affect the feelings of others, it is necessary to appear affected ourselves, I accompanied the song with the most extravagant gestures and ridiculous grimaces. Scarcely had I concluded the first verse before Zeinabia suddenly burst into a violent fit of laughter. Peglin, perceiving the effect I had unexpectedly produced, exhibited transports of the most extravagant joy, until the patient discovered, by the violence of her laughter, symptoms of an hysterick kind, when, apprehensive that the sudden transition she had experienced had affected her senses, his countenance suddenly assumed the appearance of dismay and terror. I must confess that I scarcely knew what to think of her situation myself. But our fears were soon happily removed by her ceasing to laugh, and addressing her discourse to Peglin in the following terms:

"Good sir," said she, "no longer be alarmed for the situation of my health; this captive will afford me relief. My melancholy mind yields itself to the superior power of his delightful art. I feel myself quite another being than I was a moment ago. I cannot return my thanks too warmly to this great physician, who seems to have discerned better than any of the others the nature of my complaint. I

hope you will, at my earnest request, grant him his liberty."

"O Zeinabia!" replied the pirate, "that is the smallest price he has to expect from my gratitude. Leave to me the care of discharging the debt you owe to him, and be assured I shall reward him well for having saved the life of her I love."

The pirate certainly was not ungrateful.

"Christian," said he to me on the same day, "great as the sum may be which I might expect for the ransom of such a captive, it would not be rewarding you sufficiently for the services you have rendered to an amiable mistress and a deserving son, if I were merely to restore you to liberty and your country. There," added he, in presenting me a purse, "receive with your liberty this purse; it is the same I took from you on the day you fell into my hands. You shall also immediately again behold the shores of Spain; and it affords me some pleasure to reflect that you will not have, on rejoining your friends, a history extremely lamentable to relate to them of your slavery at Algiers."

If I had only brought away from Algiers my person and purse, I should have been well satisfied with my fate; but I was not suffered to leave the country without still greater satisfaction. On the ensuing day, Zeinabia's favourite slave contrived to speak with me when I was quite alone, and putting a small casket into my hands, "Take this casket, young Castilian," said she; "my mistress, apprehensive that our master may not have rewarded you equal to your merits, begs you will accept this present from her; with this single recommen-

dation, that you will carefully conceal from whence it came."

Concluding that the beautiful captive had presented me with this casket unknown to Peglin, and apprehending that if he should discover it previous to my departure, the face of my affairs might assume an inauspicious appearance, the recommendation with which it was accompanied gave me great uneasiness. Happily, however, this dangerous secret remained concealed ; for I was immediately afterwards put on board a swift-sailing vessel, in which I shortly reached the Straits, and arrived at Tarifa.

No sooner did my feet touch the welcome shore, than, like another Pandora, I was impatient to inspect my unknown treasures ; and choosing the first convenient place for gratifying my curiosity, I opened the casket, and found in it ten precious stones of different kinds, which appeared to me, although I was altogether ignorant of their qualities, so full of lustre, that I concluded they were of great value.

Fear, however, immediately interposed, and diminished the joy I felt in the contemplation of this valuable property. "By what route," said I, "shall I safely reach Burgos ? A passage by sea to St. Andero exposes me to the dangers of being captured by some other pirate ; and if I trust myself with the muleteers, and these dangerous fellows should suspect that I am rich, I shall be a ruined man."

To extricate myself from the embarrassment in which my treasures placed me, I resolved to follow the suggestion of the moment, and to take the road to Burgos in the miserable garb I now wear, as the most likely means of deceiving robbers. Accord-

ingly, hiding my riches with all possible care, I pursued my journey towards Seville in the character of a poor captive who had escaped from Barbary, after a slavery of five years. To avoid all suspicion, at the several inns I came to at night, I ate an humble supper of bread and cheese, and requested the charitable permission to sleep on straw; I even begged sometimes on the highways, whenever I met those whose ill looks seemed to threaten the safety of my diamonds. Not to fatigue your attention any longer, gentlemen, continued Don Joachim, I have only to add that, in travelling in this artful manner, I have arrived here without meeting with any accident.

This is the whole of my history. You feel, I have no doubt, some curiosity to see the casket which Zeinabia presented to me; and I will now show it you.

He accordingly drew a small casket from the bottom of a private pocket, and, opening it, displayed to us three diamonds, two turquoises, two rubies, and three emeralds, which we examined one by one, in great admiration of their size and lustre.

"How much," said Ferrari, "do you think they are worth?"

"Don Mathias de Grajal can inform us," replied Don Sebastian; "for he knows the value of these articles as well as any jeweller."

Grajal, after examining them very attentively, estimated their value altogether at ten thousand ducats.

Congratulating Don Joachim on his rich prize, we gave him the appellation of *the Happy Slave*, and rallied him not a little on his motive for quitting the army in Catalonia, and for travelling with the deserter as an itinerant musician.

"Indeed, my dear brother," said Don Sebastian, "we cannot reconcile the valour you exhibited at the siege of Cambriel with the weak or rather unworthy fears which induced you to quit the service."

"Brother," replied Don Joachim, "impute it to Nature, that forms us in whatever mould best pleases her fancy. Besides, I have already suffered as much as the occasion requires, and it is that kind of service which any other man is just as well able to perform as myself."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE NEWS WHICH VANILLO RECEIVED, AND THE CAUSE OF HIS QUITTING THE CHATEAU OF FERRARI TO RETURN TO MADRID—THE SITUATION IN WHICH HE FOUND DALFA AND BERNARDINA, AND THE NEW MISFORTUNE HE EXPERIENCED.

THE pleasures which accompanied this friendly society were not diminished by the arrival of Don Joachim, but considerably increased by his elegant manners and lively conversation.

A period of four months had nearly elapsed in the enjoyment of those innocent amusements which rural life affords, when a rumour prevailed that the Duke of Ossuna, who had recently returned from his government of Naples, had been arrested by the King's command, and confined in the castle of Almeda.

Little occasion as I had to be interested in this event, for reasons already related, I could not help feeling it with great sensibility. The Duke of Ossuna was a character that I really loved ; his faults were amply overbalanced by many good qualities ; and I had long forgotten all the mortifications he had caused me to feel. So sensibly, indeed, did his misfortune affect me, that I requested Ferrari would permit me to visit Madrid, that I might learn, by my own inquiries, the real situation of this illustrious statesman ; and Ferrari acceded to my proposal, on condition that I would return when my curiosity was satisfied.

Engaging accordingly with a muleteer at Burgos, I returned to Madrid; but, impatient as I was to learn the situation of the Duke's affairs, my first object was to inquire about my own; and immediately on my arrival I visited my fair associates, who received me with friendly reproaches for neglecting to inform them of my welfare during my absence.

"How negligent!" exclaimed Signora Dalfa. "You did not discover more unconcern even when you had no share in our partnership. The business, however," continued she, "is not unsuccessful; and my niece and I, by the manner in which we manage it, increase its profits daily. Two hundred pistoles are already in our coffers."

"How!" exclaimed I, "two hundred pistoles! What a vast quantity of faded beauty must have been restored to amass so considerable a sum!"

"Oh! as for that," replied Bernardino, laughingly, "I will answer you. A great number of terrible faces have indeed passed through our hands."

After conversing for some time with these amiable and useful friends, I rose to take my leave, when Signora Dalfa detained me, saying she had enclosed the third part of the contents of the coffer in a bag, and laid it by for my use, and which she immediately delivered to me, assuring me that I should always have a faithful account of the moneys which accumulated from time to time in the partnership funds.

Charmed with the good management of my fair friends, I paid them a thousand compliments, particularly on their integrity, which I could not enough admire; although it was perhaps much less admirable than I imagined, as I had no certainty that what I

received was, in fact, only a third part of the joint funds our coffer contained. It would, however, have been extremely wrong to have been discontented; for, considering the women had it in their power to use me much worse, it was, I think, using me with wonderful generosity.

On quitting the ladies I went directly to Andre-sillo's hotel, where I had kept an apartment, and secured my bag of pistoles in my portmanteau. From thence I proceeded to the mansion of the Duke of Ossuna, in hope of meeting in its environs some domestic of my acquaintance who might inform me of his situation; and my expectation was not deceived; for, just as I approached the door, I observed a tall man coming out, whom I recollect in Sicily a little page.

Politely addressing him, "Signor Cylindro," said I, "I fancy you do not recollect me?"

"Pardon me," replied he, "you are Signor Vanillo Gonzales. I recollect you again perfectly well, although you are in some degree altered."

"And I also knew you again, my friend," replied I, "although you have advanced at least three feet in height since I last saw you. Will you do me the favour to tell me the news concerning my old master, whom I still love as well as when I was in his service?"

"We are not now," replied Cylindro, "in a proper place to speak of the affairs of a nobleman so dear to us both. Come with me to the first cabaret, and while we drink a bottle of Lucenna, I will unfold to you the embarrassment into which the too open and unsuspecting disposition of the Duke has plunged him."

Unwilling to permit an occasion so favourable to my views to escape, we entered a hotel, where Cylin-dro, having filled and drank, began in these terms :

"Were you at Madrid when the Duke made his public entry ?"

"No," replied I ; "I was at the chateau of a gentle-man, a friend of mine, who resides near Burgos, where I enjoyed the pleasures of a very agreeable society, and took no part whatever in the transac-tions of the court. I was even ignorant that his Excellency had returned from the government of Naples ; and the first account I received of him, only two days ago, was that of his imprisonment."

"You would have seen," replied Cyindro, "the most superb entry that any viceroy ever made. No governor from New Spain ever made so ostentatious, and, between ourselves, so imprudent an exhibition. Every rational Spaniard, therefore, that beheld the scene, condemned, while they admired its splendour. The Duke's enemies, who are both numerous and powerful, did not fail to consider his pompous retinue, the magnificent presents he made to the royal family, and the riches he brought from Italy, as proofs of criminality ; observing that his disinterestedness and the fidelity of his administration might be easily estimated from these circumstances. But it produced consequences still more unfortunate," continued the page. "The King, without doubt, has suffered his mind to be tainted with strong prejudices against the Duke, since, notwithstanding the favourable reception he gave him on his arrival, he has sent him a prisoner to the castle of Almeda. The friends and partisans of the Giron family seem to flatter themselves that it

is only a temporary storm, which will soon pass away. They insist that a Viceroy who has rendered such important services to the nation, and performed so many laudable actions in Sicily, where he is still adored, must in consequence soon triumph over all his enemies, and be restored with honour to the government of Naples. I wish it may be so, but I do not believe it will ever happen; for I tremble at his situation when I reflect, that not only the Count de Benevento and Don Balthazar de Zuniga, but the Duke de Olivarez, the three most powerful men at court, particularly the two last, who now divide between them the government of the monarchy, are his avowed enemies. Adversaries so extremely formidable, whose power has already ruined the Duke of Lerma and his son, will, I fear, also overwhelm my master."

"Oh no!" exclaimed I to Cylindro; "let us hope that it is impossible for them to induce his Majesty to repay with the blackest ingratitude the services of a man who, beyond contradiction, confers the highest honour on the Spanish nation."

"I doubt it," replied the page; "notwithstanding the many enterprises by which he has increased the lustre of the crown, and which plead so eloquently in his favour, they will say he is not innocent. Instead of applauding his merit, they will slander him with the worst of crimes. I perceive but too clearly the fate which his enemies are preparing for him. Merely to accomplish his fall will not content them. In the meantime, they have committed him to close and rigorous imprisonment. I cannot think of his situation without feeling the tenderest concern. Enclosed

within the walls of Almeda, his only attendants are two of his domestics, who are not permitted to go without the walls ; and all his company, the governor of the prison with six archers of the guard. The governor also is his mortal enemy. Good God ! is this the way to treat a Viceroy, whose equal in goodness and integrity was never known ? ”

Cylindro was much affected, and burst into tears, and I could not avoid following his example.

I then inquired after Thomas and Quivillo.

“ As for Thomas,” replied Cylindro, “ the gout has fastened him to his arm-chair at home; but your good friend Quivillos till enjoys admirable health. Like me, he waits to see the end of this business, in order to regulate his conduct accordingly.”

Having had this conversation, the page and I quitted each other ; he to execute a commission for the Duchess, and I to visit my friends Thomas and Quivillo at the mansion of the Duke. I was first conducted to the apartment of Quivillo, who received me as graciously as a man so overcome with grief could do.

“ Sir,” said I, “ upon the afflicting news of the Duke’s adversity, I have come from Burgos to Madrid to assure you, that notwithstanding the reason which his Excellency has given me to complain of his conduct, there is no one feels his situation with more acute sensibility.”

“ Oh ! his Excellency no longer retains the sentiments he expressed to you,” replied Quivillo ; “ he is sensible of the harshness of his conduct towards you, and I have frequently heard him lament the treatment you received.”

"By this communication," replied I, "you render his misfortunes still more painful to my mind."

"I am glad to find," said Quivillo, "that your affection for his Excellency is unimpaired; he will reward sooner than you imagine, perhaps, the interest you take in his welfare; for it is thought that the principal charges adduced against him will appear to his judges so many testimonies in his favour. They will perceive that his imputed crimes resolve themselves into exploits equally glorious to himself and advantageous to the state. In short, if his Majesty bestows the least attention to the petition which the Duchess has presented in favour of her husband, he will be persuaded that envy, hatred, and malice are the only motives from which the Viceroy, so worthy of his protection, has been degraded. Therefore, my friend Vanillo," added he, "let us console ourselves with the pleasing hope that he will soon be released from prison, with honour to himself, confusion to his enemies, and advantage to his friends."

During this conversation a page entered the room, and informed Quivillo that the Duchess desired to speak with him. We accordingly parted; he going to the Duchess, and I towards the apartment of Thomas, being unwilling to leave the house without visiting him. I found him reclined on a couch in his chamber, with a small table before him, upon which he was writing, although he had the gout in his hands as well as feet. He recollect ed me immediately, and appeared to feel some pleasure at seeing me again.

"My dear Vanillo," said he, "I am sorry I have not seen you before this time, as I have it in my

power to inform you that I have made your peace with the Duke. He is no longer irritated against you. Seizing every favourable moment to conciliate his mind, I have not only subdued his anger, but caused him to feel a real regret for having punished you too severely. I would have informed you of my success if I had known where to find you. Had you followed us to Naples and presented yourself to his Excellency, you would certainly have regained his good opinion. But," continued Thomas, "it is better late than never. When he is acquitted of the crimes with which his enemies have dared to accuse him, you may expect to be restored to your former station, or rather to mine, which my increasing infirmities will no longer permit me to fill."

The old valet almost convinced me by this discourse that I had done him an injury by supposing him to have been my secret enemy; and, in the penitence of my heart, I thanked him for the goodwill he had always expressed towards me. Returning soon after to my hotel, I considered myself as already fixed in the service of the Duke, who, I made no doubt, would soon be liberated and sent back to Naples, with new powers for the government of that kingdom, where I promised myself many pleasures. But while I was thus anticipating the future prosperity of the Duke, the dangers of his present situation greatly increased. Quivillo, whom I saw on the ensuing day, informed me that it had been suggested to the King that the friends and adherents of the Duke of Ossuna had resolved to force the prison of Almeda, and that orders had been thereupon issued, not only to double the number of

guards, as well within as without the walls, but to prevent every person, whoever he may be, from approaching the gates. This unfounded alarm had been raised to furnish a pretence for seizing the persons of those who were attached to this unfortunate nobleman. And in truth, all the disbanded officers, together with the gentlemen, whether Neapolitans or Sicilians, who were in the service of the Duke, were arrested or imprisoned. The Marquis de Pobar, captain of the archers, came even to the Duke's house and seized the faithful Quivillo.

As I happened to be present, the Marquis inquired of me whether I belonged to the Duke; and I told him without hesitation that, though I was not then, I had formerly been in his service.

"Then," replied the Marquis, "you will be pleased to follow us: you will not make one too many in the state prison."

Instead of feeling the least alarm on being surrounded by the guards, I relied with courage upon my conscious innocence, and hastily entered the prison, more rejoiced than afflicted by an event which I hoped the Duke would in a short time be in a situation to remember with gratitude.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CAUSE OF VANILLO'S BEING RELEASED AFTER FIFTEEN DAYS' CONFINEMENT; AND THE REASON OF HIS BEING SENT TO THE CASTLE OF ALMEDA TO KEEP THE DUKE OF OSSUNA COMPANY.

A MAN who has beheld the terrible dungeons of the Holy Office may look without alarm round the place in which I was now confined. It was a dark and spacious hall, called the Royal Chamber, containing, for the comfortless accommodation of its inmates, six hard mattresses and as many bolsters stuffed with straw. But the inconveniency of the lodgings were more than balanced by the excellency of the board; for the minister took good care, and perhaps for good reasons, that state prisoners should not be starved to death. Indeed, if our beds had been as pleasant as our board, we should have been too happy. Six objects of ministerial vengeance, who had been arrested, as it were, by *anticipation*, that is, for the offence they *would have* committed if *they had* attempted to release, or had entertained any intention of attempting to release, the Duke of Ossuna from the castle of Almeda, were now fellow-prisoners in this state chamber; and when we recognised each other as the partisans of that illustrious nobleman, the common cause by which we were united consoled our minds.

The warden also, who was a man of high spirit and secretly attached to the Duke, afforded us the additional satisfaction of informing us of every step which the minister was taking against him.

"Gentlemen," said he one day, "I have important news to tell you. This morning it was discussed in the cabinet whether the Duke should be prosecuted with extreme rigour, be set at liberty, or be confined for life. Various opinions were entertained. The enemies of his Excellency insisted that he ought to be proceeded against for high treason. His friends contended that, however imprudent he had been upon some occasions, his conduct upon many others had been highly meritorious; that he had been importantly serviceable to the Catholic cause; that on a general view his merits greatly overbalanced his demerits; and that his Majesty, swayed more by the suggestions of clemency than the demands of political justice, ought to grant him a pardon, and set him immediately at liberty. But the voice of candour and moderation was overpowered by the clamours of faction. The alarmists contended, with great virulence, that the public had a right to be satisfied of the guilt or innocence of the accused, and therefore it was necessary to bring him to trial. At length, however, it was determined to wait until the arrival of the expected documents from Sicily and Naples; the respective Viceroys of these dependencies having received orders from the court to inquire very minutely into the conduct of the Duke during his administration, and to transmit to Madrid the result of their inquiries.

Fondly as I hoped that these depositions would

clearly establish the general good character of the illustrious prisoner, and that a man who had obtained so many signal victories over the enemies of his country would find his judges prepossessed in his favour, the information which the warden had given us raised many apprehensions in my mind ; for, having been an eyewitness of the Duke's conduct, I was conscious it would be difficult, even for his most zealous friends, entirely to justify some parts of it.

The expected papers soon afterwards arrived ; and on the matter being again discussed in the privy council, they were referred to the inspection and consideration of Don Gaspar de Vallejo and Don Francis Alarcan, two statesmen of high honour and approved integrity, from whose report we formed great hopes in the Duke's favour, which were considerably increased about ten days afterwards by a rumour that the contents of the documents from Sicily, instead of condemning his conduct, resounded his praise, and that the nobility and gentry there unanimously desired he might be again appointed to the government of that island. It appeared, indeed, that the depositions from Naples were not favourable to him ; for they charged him with having committed many crimes ; but these were reported by the commissioners to be, in all the material points, totally vague and without foundation, and upon this inquiry he was adjudged innocent of the charges alleged against him.

But it was not thought prudent to set a man of his high and daring spirit at liberty immediately after such violent and unsupported measures had been taken against him, especially as he still pos-

sessed a great number of powerful friends, who might, with his assistance, give great disturbance to the state. He was accordingly detained a prisoner in the castle of Almeda; but, to soften in some degree the severity of this detention, he was permitted to see his friends and relations, and allowed the privilege of being waited on by his own domestics. The several persons also who had been arrested for their affectionate attachment to him were discharged.

I quitted very willingly the royal apartment, and returned to the house of Andresillo, where I found my portmanteau in the same condition I had left it; for my host was a man quite incapable of anything dishonourable.

Anxious to obtain some information respecting the fate of my friend Quivillo, I went immediately afterwards to the Duke's house, not doubting but that he also had been liberated, and I found him there in conversation with Thomas, who expressed great satisfaction at seeing me, and told me that he had an offer to make to me, of which he hoped I would accept.

"You must know," continued he, "that yesterday my gout permitted me to visit the castle of Almeda, where I saw the Duke, and I spoke to him in your favour. The circumstance of your being apprehended and imprisoned for having been formerly in his service was so ridiculous, that he could not help laughing at it.

"'Poor lad,' said he, 'I have been the cause of giving him a great deal of unnecessary pain.'

"'Your Excellency,' said I, 'should take him again

under your protection. A servant of his description would amuse you in your confinement.'

"'I shall,' replied the Duke, 'most willingly restore him to my service, and if he will voluntarily submit to immure himself within the walls of this prison I am sure his company and conversation would afford me great pleasure.'

"'Will submit, my lord!' replied I; 'oh! do not injure him by doubting it. He will, I am certain, willingly resign his liberty until you recover yours.'

"This is the proposal I have to make to you. Consider of it. Is your affection for the Duke sufficient to induce you to share his situation in the castle of Almeda? You may easily believe that he will not remain there the remainder of his life. The eyes of his Majesty are at present, it is true, shut against his merits; but time will clear away the film of prejudice, and you will then find that in keeping this illustrious captive company, you have done no injury to yourself."

While I protested that it would form the future pleasure of my life not only to enter into the service of his Excellency, but to alleviate, by any means in my power, the vexations of captivity, the faithful old valet interrupted me by observing that such sentiments as these would render my company still more pleasing and consolatory to his Excellency, especially as he had been made acquainted that my present condition rendered the profits of servitude quite unnecessary.

Matters being thus settled between us, I went to my hotel, and, packing up my necessaries, returned immediately to Quivillo, who was waiting to conduct

me in the Duke's coach to my new prison. On our arrival at the castle, the guard at the gate permitted us to enter without asking a single question ; and, passing through a large courtyard, we ascended a flight of marble steps, which led to the apartment in which the noble prisoner was confined.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE STATE IN WHICH VANILLO FOUND THE DUKE OF OSSUNA—IN WHAT MANNER THAT NOBLEMAN RECEIVED HIM—THE CONVERSATION THEY HAD WITH EACH OTHER; AND THE PERSONAGES BY WHOM IT WAS INTERRUPTED.

THE Viceroy,—for so, by way of excellency, I shall always distinguish the Duke of Ossuna,—although, after what Thomas had told him, he must have expected to see me, exhibited strong marks of astonishment when I entered the room.

“How, Vanillo,” cried he, “is it possible that friendship for your old master can induce you to partake of his troubles? Can you prefer the sorrowful life which he passes here to all the gay and lively pleasures of Madrid?”

“Yes, sir,” replied I; “the pleasure of being near the person of your Excellency, and of receiving your commands, is more delightful to me than liberty. Such is the sensibility that your imprisonment has excited, that your own heart cannot feel your troubles with more poignancy than I do.”

“Is it possible,” exclaimed the Duke, “that in spite of the bad treatment you received from me in Sicily, you have always preserved a zeal and affection for me? I blush when I think of the injustice I committed; and, to repair the injury, as Thomas is no longer in a condition to fill that place, I select you

for my confidential attendant. Do you," continued he, addressing himself to Quivillo, "return to Madrid, and inform Donna Catherina that you have found for me a man whose company will occasionally suspend the effect of my chagrin."

Quivillo departed, well satisfied with my reception, leaving me alone with the Duke, who, seating himself in his arm-chair, and reflecting on the unpleasant situation of his affairs, "Vanillo," said he, "draw a chair and tell me all you have been doing since your departure from Sicily. You have, without doubt, experienced many pleasant adventures?"

"The most pleasant," replied I, "was the danger I escaped of being burned as a conjurer at the last sacrifice of the Holy Inquisition."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the Duke; "you certainly cannot be serious!"

"Pardon me," replied I. "At the last *auto-da-fé* I was one of the unhappy victims destined to carry the *samarra*, upon which flames and devils are painted, and my head was menaced with the ornament of a *carochas*; but I fortunately escaped."

"I am eager to be informed," replied the Duke, "how you could release yourself from the grip of the Holy Inquisition, whose dungeons I consider like a place from *whose bourn no traveller returns*."

Fearful of fatiguing my noble auditor, I succinctly recited this adventure; but he insisted on my giving him a very circumstantial account of the whole transaction, which obliged me to enlarge the subject of my narration; and I detailed to him a journal of my residence in Italy and return to Spain. I began by relating the manner in which I became a pharma-

copolist ; my attachment to Violetta, the daughter of Potoschi ; and how, when I was on the verge of marrying her, I quietly surrendered her to the arms of a more favourite lover, quitted Palermo, and embarked for Leghorn.

The Viceroy was so highly entertained by this portion of my adventures, that he requested of me to relate to him the subsequent story of my life ; and I performed the task in so lively a manner, that, oppressed as he was by the circumstances of his misfortunes, he burst occasionally into involuntary fits of laughter, particularly when I described the several characters to whom I administered my grand specifics for restoring decayed beauty, and the wonderful transformation they effected on the persons of my patients. But at length, conceiving that it was fiction, calculated merely to divert him, he interrupted me.

"Gonzales," said he, "you exaggerate the virtues of your compositions : they may at most, perhaps, remove freckles, embellish the complexion, and soften the skin ; but it is impossible to conceive that they have power to invert the order of nature, by giving the high and rosy bloom of youth to the withered cheeks of age."

"Excuse me, sir," replied I ; "the compositions I am speaking of possess very extraordinary and surprising powers ; they completely metamorphose the patient, and restore to faded beauty its time-stolen charms. You will no longer doubt its efficacy, when I tell you that the Baroness de Conca, who so powerfully attracted your attention, as well as her mother, the Lady Blanche, whom my predecessor

Thomas thought so rosy, did not disdain to use them."

"How can you know that?" inquired the Viceroy.

"Because," replied I, "Potoschi, the inventor, who furnished these ladies with them, has frequently informed me that the Baroness, young as she was, owed her conquest over your Excellency less to her own nature than to his art."

The idea of having been enamoured with factitious beauty raised a blush upon the Duke's cheek; it wounded his vanity; but I being the only witness of this petty mortification, he affected to laugh at his credulity, and endeavoured to pass it off as a matter unregarded. Immediately afterwards, however, assuming a serious countenance, "Vanillo," said he, "if you really possess this important secret, you will soon be rich."

"I should have been so now," replied I, "if the Inquisition would have permitted it; but I was unfortunately denounced to the holy tribunal, and arrested as a chemist who had recourse to magic in performing his operations."

Not content with merely stating the fact, I gave the Duke a faithful account of this transaction in every particular circumstance, and you will easily conceive that I did not forget to tell him of the total confiscation of my property.

The laughter into which the description I gave of this event threw the Duke, was interrupted by the arrival of the Duchess and Don Juan Telles, their son, who visited the castle daily. "You must be surprised," said his Excellency to Donna Catherina, "to find me in so merry a mood, considering the

gloomy condition of my affairs; but I could not resist the impulse which a ridiculous adventure Vanillo has just related to me created."

"Since he possesses the power of amusing you," said the Duchess, "I am extremely happy that you have him as a companion; especially as I have been assured by both Thomas and Quivillo that he has ever preserved for you a sincere attachment."

"I am convinced of it," replied the Duke, "and I hope I shall hereafter have it in my power to reward his zeal and affection. The gaiety of his humour is very agreeable to me, and his liveliness will, I perceive, prevent the intrusion of many unpleasing reflections."

Donna Catherina, wishing to impart some private matters to her husband, desired him to walk towards the window; and while they were conversing, Don Juan earnestly entreated me to afford his father all the comfort in my power, and to diminish, if possible, the chagrin that preyed upon his mind; assuring me that my kind attentions would be gratefully remembered by the Duke on his being enlarged, "which," added he, "we have great reason to expect in a few days." The Duchess also, as I attended her to her carriage, repeated the request, and gave me the same information, so that I had every reason to be content with my confinement, and to flatter myself that my complaisance would soon meet with its reward.

CHAPTER L.

*THE MEANS VANILLO EMPLOYED TO DIVERT THE MIND
OF THE NOBLE PRISONER, AND THE EFFECTS HE
PRODUCED.*

THE Duke, on the departure of his family, threw himself into his arm-chair, and desired me to acquaint him by what miracle I had escaped from the clutches of the Holy Office. While I was relating to him the manner in which I procured my freedom, through the interest of the Count de Olivarez, a profound sigh issued from his bosom. "You speak," said he, "of a person who plays a very exalted character on the political theatre of Spain; a man who happily possesses the great art of riveting the mind of his royal master to his will. Even the Duke of Lerma never possessed a more powerful ascendancy over the mind of Philip the Third. But Olivarez, alas! unfortunately for me, is my determined enemy, and, with the Count de Benevento, directs the designs of the party who are now seeking my ruin. Had it not been for the malignant envy of these two noblemen, I should, long ere this, have been at liberty; or rather, I should never have been confined. Instead of my conduct being impeached, a statue would have been raised to commemorate the services I have rendered the crown; but superior merit wounded their envious souls, and they have not only used every endeavour to compass my death, but, fearful of the effect my

liberty might produce, unite in perpetuating my imprisonment."

Conceiving, from the manner in which the Duke uttered this sorrowful declamation, that he was sinking into a melancholy humour, I suddenly changed the conversation to the subject of the Holy Office; and, by a train of happy ideas which occurred to me on the occasion, I disposed his mind to pleasant reflections.

On asking him whether he did not think it extraordinary that I should be accused of sorcery, merely for knowing how to prepare a composition for the use of the ladies, he replied, with an air of raillery, "Not at all; for if it be true that Potoschi's art gave my Italian Baroness the lustre in which she appeared to me, I really think you must have some dealing with the devil; for she was a woman whose complexion seemed, to my observation, perfectly natural; and, therefore, you was, in my opinion, very fortunate indeed to escape the flames."

"True," replied I, in a jocose manner, "I merited this species of punishment from the Inquisition as much as the punishment I suffered at Palermo when I was accused of being a murderer; but I beg your Excellency's pardon for the observation."

"Oh! my dear Vanillo," cried the Duke, "forget, I entreat you, the injustice I committed. Excuse the mind of a lover distracted with suspicions and overcome with grief. Let the fatal event be hereafter buried in oblivion."

The Duke pronounced these words with a sensibility so tender that it deeply affected my heart. How easily may superiors banish from the mind of infe-

riors all sense of injuries received! Charmed by the repentance which his Excellency expressed for the manner in which he had treated me in Sicily, my attachment augmented to a degree I had never before felt. So sensibly, indeed, was my heart touched by his returning kindness, that the tears of affection started in my eyes. The Duke observed my sensibility, and I discovered, by his emotions, the correspondent feelings of his heart; so natural is it to be affected by the pleasure of perceiving ourselves beloved. "Go, Vanillo," said he; "the future shall recompense the past. Whatever occasion I may have heretofore given you to complain of me, I will hereafter treat you in such a manner as to deserve your approbation."

These affectionate expressions bound me for ever to the Duke, who appeared to me at this moment the most amiable nobleman existing, or that ever did or would exist. Unable to suppress my joy, and yielding to the transports which agitated my mind, I threw myself at his feet and kissed his hand, without his being offended at my indecent boldness.

During this scene a bell announced that dinner was ready; and in a few minutes the major-domo entered, and acquainted the Duke that it was on the table. Rising from his chair and passing into the adjoining apartment, he seated himself alone at the table; and his equerries and gentlemen-in-waiting, to the number of nine or ten, immediately attended, and during the whole time of dinner stood round the Duke, uncovered, waiting, with respectful silence, to receive the orders he should be pleased to give; but he addressed his discourse entirely to me, and the an-

swers I made to all his questions pleased him so highly that it could not fail to excite the jealousy of those who heard him, and to raise an idea that I was about to become the favourite of their noble master.

The repast being finished, his Excellency retired into his apartment to sleep, while I, accompanying his other attendants, descended into the lower rooms, where a splendid dinner was prepared for us. The table, if it had been provided at the King's charge, would not have been so well supplied; for, although the expenses of state prisoners were in general paid by the Crown, his Majesty made no allowance for this purpose to the Duke of Ossuna,—an additional trait of malice in the conduct of the Duke's enemies, who, by an invidious distinction, had procured an order of council that he should have the privilege of living as he pleased in the castle; it being but just, they said, that a Viceroy so rich and so magnificent should be permitted to live in a manner suitable to his accustomed splendour.

The major-domo, when dinner was over, desired a private conversation with me; and taking me into an antechamber, "Signor Gonzales," said he, "will it be agreeable to you to renew our acquaintance with each other? You do not recollect me, I perceive; I was, however, in Sicily, and in the service of the Viceroy, when you were one of his pages. True it is, I did not then make a very conspicuous figure in the house. The obscure post I held was not likely to bring me much into your notice, as it was one of the lowest in the establishment; but I was soon appointed to a higher station, and, advancing from year to year,

I was at length, by the interest of my sister, who waits upon the Duchess and possesses her confidence, appointed major-domo."

"This," replied I, "is the way of the world. I congratulate you on your promotion to this high office, and request your friendship."

"I," replied he, "am anxious to obtain yours; for you will soon be, if you are not already, the Hephestion to our Alexander."

"Why, between ourselves," replied I, "I have the happiness to be looked upon with rather a favourable eye; and if you should ever have occasion for my good offices with his Excellency, I desire you will command me, and rely upon my services."

The air of high importance with which I pronounced this sentence might probably induce the major-domo to conceive me in no small degree vain and arrogant; but, if his real sentiments of my character were unfavourable, he prudently concealed them, and exhibited so warm a gratitude for the professions I had made, that we immediately entered into an intimacy which, totally devoid, as it certainly was, of all moral sentiment, assumed externally the appearances of real friendship.

This domestic was sincerely attached to his master, and had been endeavouring, with affectionate anxiety, to contrive the means of entertaining him; but, finding all his efforts for this purpose entirely fruitless, he desired that I would suggest something by which we might beguile the tedious hours of captivity. "I really cannot think of anything at present," said I. "The desponding disposition of the Duke's mind, however, must, if possible, be prevented. Something

or other must be done to amuse and divert him. Stay; an idea occurs to me at this moment: he is extremely fond, you know, of theatrical exhibitions; suppose we were to act a play before him."

The major-domo, bursting into a fit of laughter, exclaimed, "The idea is excellent; and, if it were possible to collect a company capable of carrying it into execution, I should approve very highly of the scheme; but, among the thirty servants which at present compose the Duke's establishment, there is not, I am sure, a single person who is capable of recitation."

"So much the better," replied I; "bad actors sometimes afford the highest pleasure. Good actors might perhaps make his Excellency yawn, but very bad ones must infallibly divert him; for the more ridiculous such an exhibition is, the more entertaining I always find it. Shall we make the essay?"

"Willingly," replied the major-domo; "I will undertake to bring here from Madrid, to-morrow, a volume of excellent comedies; and we will select one that is most likely to afford his Excellency pleasure."

While we were conversing upon this subject, the Duke's page acquainted us that his Excellency had just risen from his couch, and desired to see me. On entering his apartment, "O Vanillo!" exclaimed he, "assist me to dissipate the effect of a dreadful dream which has disturbed my repose: the deep impression it has made on my mind seems indelible. You will perhaps tell me that dreams are the unreal mockeries of sleep, to which no credence should be given,—and so I have always thought; but such is my present weakness, that I confess to you I cannot

help thinking that those which have lately troubled me are secret omens from Heaven of my approaching fate."

"How! my lord," exclaimed I, "is it possible that a dream can have made so powerful an impression upon so firm a mind? I am astonished"—

"Listen to me seriously, Vanillo," said his Excellency; "attend, while I disclose to you the particulars of this alarm. I conceived myself seated in a superb saloon, where Benevento and Olivarez seemed to approach me with courtesy and condescension, each of them striving who should afford the greater demonstration of kindness; but at length, methought they led me into a wild and dreary waste, overrun with thorns and briars, where they left me entangled to explore my way in painful solitude through the horrid scene; and, in endeavouring to extricate myself, I suddenly awoke. What think you, my good friend, of this dreadful dream? I, alas! fear it bodes no good. The plausibility with which these inveterate enemies appeared before me, indicates, to my apprehension, that they are at this moment meditating new schemes against me; and the inextricable situation into which I thought they led me, clearly imports that my present miserable captivity will end only with my life."

"Oh! my good lord," exclaimed I, "why will you thus ingeniously torment your mind by explaining so disadvantageously the confused notices which generally accompany the moments of perturbed repose? You resemble a state prisoner who was, not many years ago, confined in the castle of Segovia, and became the victim of his own imaginary

predictions. I will relate to you the circumstances of this singular event:

"Don Guillam de Medina del Campo, a gentleman of the province of Leon, having been accused of holding a traitorous correspondence with the insurgents in Catalonia, was arrested by an order from the King, and committed to close confinement in the castle of Segovia. While the proceedings against him were preparing, his wife and daughter daily presented themselves before the window of the dungeon in which he was confined, the grate of which commanded a view of the surrounding country, and endeavoured, by their gestures and other significant signs, to excite in his mind the hope, not only of a favourable, but speedy judgment. The trial was at length appointed, and the prisoner was acquitted. The wife and daughter, being immediately informed of this happy event, presented themselves, in the midst of their domestics, before the window of the dungeon. The domestics were charged with baskets of the richest fruits, the choicest wines, and other articles;—for the wife and daughter of the prisoner conceived that the display of a feast would clearly and unequivocally inform the prisoner, who observed their preparations, that the event of the trial was in his favour. No sooner, however, had the domestics spread the table-cloth upon the grass, in order to arrange the dishes in proper form, than the misguided imagination of the prisoner became suddenly alarmed. Instead of giving a favourable interpretation to the demonstrations of joy his fond family exhibited before him, he considered them as presages of his ap-

proaching fate. The table-cloth, in his disordered fancy, represented a shroud. This emblem of mortality convinced him that he was doomed to die, and the fears it inspired cost him his life."

A smile pervaded the countenance of the Duke as I concluded this anecdote. "This Don Guillam," said he, "had indeed a very perturbed imagination."

"Your Excellency's imagination is not less so," replied I; "you shall not be interpreter of my dreams. The enmity of the two noblemen may at this moment be subsided. Instead of still meditating your destruction, they perhaps repent of having oppressed you."

"How little, alas! do you, Vanillo, know of statesmen," replied the Duke; "be assured from me, that the hatred of a political rival is unconquerable while the object of it exists. The dream, perhaps, I may have explained improperly; but time alone can reveal my error."

Observing that the freedom with which I disclosed my sentiments pleased and entertained his Excellency, I continued my conversation with him; and having, during the afternoon, related to him the sequel of my adventures, I retired to rest.

Early in the morning of the following day the maître-d'hôtel brought me the volume of comedies which he had received from Madrid; the immortal Lopez de Vega was the author of it. We selected the celebrated comedy of *L'Ambaxador de si-mismo*, or the *Self-created Ambassador*—the subject of which is, in few words, as follows :

A young king of Leon, wishing to espouse a princess of Castile whose charms he had heard cele-

brated, resolved to visit the court of her father in disguise. He accordingly assumed the character of his own ambassador; attended the court of the Castilian king; demanded his daughter in marriage; and, after surmounting a variety of obstacles, at length obtained her hand in marriage.

"This comedy will suit us extremely well," said I; "and our first care must be to cast the parts, and deliver copies of them to the respective performers."

"As to the actors," replied he, "I have among others two who are exactly of the kind you described; for, as your main design is to make his Excellency laugh, they may, as to this purpose, be considered incomparable originals. The one is Gaspard Mocilero, the cook, and the other Joseph de Magoz, nicknamed in the household, 'El gracioso de la Cozina,' from the talent of buffoonery, and the thousand ridiculous antics he possesses, to create diversion."

"Good," replied I, "they shall perform comic parts; two of the characters, therefore, are already filled; but where shall we find actresses, particularly one capable of representing the Princess of Castile?"

"She is already found," replied the major-domo. "There is among the Duke's pages a tall youth of a fair complexion and slender form; and who, even to the sound of his voice, is so completely effeminate, that he is distinguished by the appellation of Don Seraphina Floxo; and his person is perfectly well suited to his name."

Transcribing accordingly the several parts of the drama, and delivering each to the performer whose talents we conceived it would best suit, we enjoined our company to perfect themselves as soon as pos-

sible ; and, inexperienced as they certainly were in tasks of this kind, they were able, in about a week, to recite their several parts with tolerable accuracy.

As the object of this whimsical exhibition was to elevate and surprise the Duke's mind, I conceived that our intention ought to be executed with all possible secrecy ; but my brother manager, apprehensive that his Excellency might conceive this species of entertainment improper under his present circumstances, differed from me in opinion ; and, as it was necessary that this point should be settled before we proceeded further, I repaired immediately to the Duke's apartment.

The Duke, on my entering the room, addressed me with a smile. "Gonzales," said he, "tell me candidly, are you not tired of your confinement to the castle ?"

"No, really, sir," replied I, "I shall never be tired of it in the company of such a master. And neither Don Gabriel, your Excellency's major-domo, nor myself will be to blame if we do not relieve you from occasional despondency by certain little entertainments which we have been contriving to exhibit. We are already prepared with one that I think your Excellency will not disapprove. We propose to act a play before you."

"Take good care," replied his Grace ; "a troop of strollers cannot be admitted into the castle without the permission of the governor, who, not being one of my friends, will most likely refuse such a request."

"Oh !" exclaimed I, "we do not require the assistance of strollers. The piece shall be represented by actors selected from your own domestics."

"Oh ! that is another thing," replied he ; "an

entertainment of that kind I may, I think, readily admit, without the dread of reproach; but," added he, tossing his head with a disdainful air, "I doubt a little the abilities of your actors."

"Your doubt is groundless, sir," replied I; "they are, generally speaking, excellent performers. There are many in the Theatre Royal who have not more merit. In short, I am certain the exhibition will afford you pleasure."

"Upon that assurance," replied the Duke, "I will no longer oppose your benevolent design."

The Duke, having signified his assent to our scheme, I returned to my brother manager; and, after a long consultation, we agreed to take different departments in the management of our new theatre. He consented to take upon him the office of property man, and provide, according to his own fancy, different dresses for the actors; while the more important task of prompter, to make them recite their several parts with proper emphasis, was assigned to me. The rehearsals were well worth hearing; when an actor declaimed very badly, or put himself into ridiculous postures, which was generally the case, he received my warmest applause. "Bravo!" cried I, "that is right; keep to that tone and it will do; mind and preserve that fine attitude; his Excellency will be delighted with your performances."

The piece itself, saving the respect due to the memory of the immortal author, was badly written; and, in addition, the lines were so wretchedly pronounced, that the voice of the prompter was heard at the close of every verse.

About an hour previous to the commencement of

the play, the Duchess of Ossuna and her son, Don Juan, arrived at the castle, accompanied by a few select friends, whom the Duke, on a persuasion of its being highly diverting, had invited to behold the spectacle.

What rendered the scene still more ludicrous was that Don Gabriel had resorted to a clothes-shop in Madrid, and purchased different dresses of the most fanciful kind, but as unfit for the characters to which they were respectively appropriated, as they were for the persons of those who wore them : each actor, therefore, produced an effect upon the audience the moment he appeared. Among others, I remember that Gaspard Mocillero, the cook, who represented the Majesty of Leon, no sooner appeared on the stage, than the absurdity of his dress excited a roar of laughter ; even the Viceroy could no longer contain his gravity. But if his muscles were relaxed by the oddity of Mocillero's dress, his ridiculous attitudes afforded a still greater subject of laughter ; he could no longer resist the impulse ; and the whole company, perceiving him so well inclined to dispel his spleen, heartily followed his example.

Joseph de Magoz, the Gracioso de la Cozina, played the part of the king's confidant ; and, like his master, afforded his audience great entertainment. The very sight of his person, indeed, provoked risibility ; he was a species of dwarf, strangely shaped, and his entree greatly increased the mirth of the company ; but it is impossible to describe the high entertainment which the natural primness and affected airs of the tall page, who personated the Princess of Castile, produced. Self-love pre-

vented him from discovering his absurdities. The company, however, severely censured his ridiculous vanity by applauding him with that humiliating clap of hands, which is sometimes practised at the royal theatres, when the audience mean to disapprove of the acting of the players, or the composition of the author; and the piece concluded just in time to prevent the company being fatigued with their entertainment.

"I must acknowledge, my lord," said the Duchess to her husband, "that you appear to have been much delighted."

"Madam," replied he, "I owe my entertainment to Gonzales, who sagaciously conceived that a play represented by such actors could not fail of diversion."

"I am happy," replied Donna Catherina, "to find that Gonzales possesses the talent of contriving these amusements for you; and I request that he will redouble his endeavours to banish from your mind the sorrowful ideas by which it is frequently depressed."

"The commencement of his endeavours is excellent," said the Duke; "and though he has been with me so short a time, I find that he is capable of considerably alleviating, if he cannot entirely subdue, my afflictions."

The Viceroy, by these words, greatly strengthened my interest with the Duchess and Don Juan, who, from the new testimonies of friendship they afforded me, confirmed the hope I entertained of being amply recompensed.

CHAPTER LI.

THE DUKE, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE CARE OF VANILLO, FALLS INTO A DESPONDENCY WHICH NOTHING COULD DISSIPATE—THE UNHAPPY EVENT WHICH SOON FOLLOWED IT.

DURING the course of three weeks I was enabled, with the assistance of the principal domestics, to amuse his Excellency. We exerted ourselves in every possible way to dispel the melancholy that preyed upon his mind, and we had every reason to rejoice in our success. Our congratulations, however, upon this subject were of short duration. The gout, with which he was occasionally afflicted, attacked him so violently that, instead of attending to our amusements, he abandoned his mind to the sorrows his situation inspired; and all that we could either say or do, to alleviate his chagrin, produced no effect.

Observing that our efforts were vain, "Sir," said I, "we are at a loss whose assistance to implore to relieve your Excellency from the languor into which you appear to have lately fallen. Do not suffer your fortitude to be vanquished on the very eve, perhaps, of your emancipation. Revive your dejected spirits. Recollect how much it tarnishes a great and heroic character, not to endure misfortune with magnanimity. If you fall under the frowns of fortune, you will only add to the felicity of your

enemies. Do not afford this triumph to their malevolence."

"What would you have me do?" replied the Duke. "While any hope of being released from these walls remained, I patiently endured my sufferings; but hope is now no more, and I perceive that my enemies intend to detain me in prison for the remainder of my life."

"No, no, sir!" replied I; "do not permit such an idea to disturb your mind. Heaven will, I hope, prevent so unmerited a fate."

While I was proceeding to display the most consolatory observations my zeal and eloquence could furnish me with, Don Juan Telles entered the room. "Oh! my lord," cried I, "you could not have come more opportunely. Aid me to banish the vain fears which have suddenly seized the mind of my beloved master."

On hearing these words, which I pronounced with the tenderest emotion (for I really felt a warm attachment for the Viceroy), Don Juan asked me the cause of his father's fears.

"He fears," said I, "that he is deprived for ever of his liberty."

The young lord, addressing himself to the Duke, "Do not, my dear father," said he, "listen to the vain fears which agitate your mind. The news of this day ought to remove every apprehension. At the King's levee this morning, the Count declared his surprise at your being detained a prisoner, after the answers you had given to the interrogatories; acknowledging that they afforded incontestible proofs, both

of your innocence and of the important services you have rendered to the crown of Spain."

"This was the observation of an invidious enemy," interrupted the Duke precipitately; "this minister still hates me, or why does he not espouse my cause, since he says I am unjustly detained a prisoner? No, no, my dear son, judge more correctly of this statesman's character, by believing, that while he seems to lament my situation, the traitor only regrets that I was not condemned to die. I am convinced of his animosity towards me. Ties of the closest nature have connected me with the house of Sandoval, and a man who has been once favoured by the Duke of Lerma can never expect the friendship of the Count Olivarez."

An attempt to remove any opinion which the Viceroy had once deliberately adopted, was like beating the air. Don Juan, therefore, who knew his character, forbore to contradict him, and only observed, that the minister, being now conscious that his power was established beyond the danger of opposition, might perhaps be softened in his resentments.

"Excuse me," replied the Duke; "he has frequently, in the presence of the King, darted sarcasms at me, which I have answered by such severe replies as he will never forget."

"Well," replied Don Juan, "however it may be, let me implore you, my dear father, not to despair. Banish dejection; abandon this fatal melancholy; reassume your spirits; the interests and affections of your family exact from you this exertion."

These exhortations, pronounced in the most

pathetic manner by an affectionate child, appeared to make great impression on the mind of a tender parent; but the idea of never regaining his power at Court recurred, and plunged him into a deep despair, at the very moment when he seemed to reassume his courage.

The ensuing day, his Excellency, so far from having tranquillised his mind by philosophic reflections, appeared more disturbed and agitated than ever. The gout, also, to increase his calamities, returned with double violence. During a period of three weeks he continued to languish; and one evening, as he was walking across the room, leaning one arm on me, and supporting himself on the other side with a crutch, he was seized with an apoplexy. Calling for help, I conveyed him, with the assistance of two of his domestics, to his bed, where he lay three hours entirely senseless. Another servant, while he was in this distressful situation, went with all possible despatch to Madrid, to announce the sad tidings to his wife and son, who came immediately to the castle, accompanied by two physicians; but they attended rather to be witnesses of his death than to use endeavours to save his life. Pretensions of assistance, however, were made, and some medicines even were administered; but they only served to precipitate his end; for two days afterwards he resigned his life, in the arms of his wife, and in the embraces of his son.

CHAPTER LII.

*THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DUKE OF OSSUNA'S DEATH,
AND THE CONSOLATION WHICH THE KING AFFORDED
TO HIS WIFE AND SON—VANILLO ENTERS INTO THE
SERVICE OF DON JUAN TELLES.*

THE governor of the castle no sooner heard of the death of his prisoner than he conveyed information of it to the Prime Minister, who went immediately and announced it to the King. The Sovereign, as well as his Prime Minister, were, it is said, affected by the event; but I do not advance this as an unquestionable fact. The King, however, certainly despatched a nobleman of the first distinction to the Duchess, to offer to her from him his compliments of condolence, with orders to assure her that her son Don Juan Telles should be appointed to the Viceroyalty of Sicily, as an acknowledgment to him of his father's services. This mark of contrition, if it did not entirely console the mother and the son, moderated in some degree the excess of their affliction.

The interment of the Duke was performed without pomp, and in the manner he had frequently desired. I mean to be understood that he was buried under the habit of an Augustine father. His grave was plentifully bedewed with tears: the grief of his numerous domestics was loud and bitter; for they had heard that he had died intestate. Even

I, though I shed some unfeigned tears in friendship for so kind a master, could not sometimes avoid regretting the hours I had lost in voluntarily confining myself with him in the prison of Almeda; nor forget the magnificent promises I had received, which were now worth nothing. In short, while we were all of us waiting in sorrowful expectation of receiving no more than our salaries, a rumour prevailed that the Duke, about a month before he died, had made a codicil, as if by presentiment that he was doomed to expire within the walls of the castle; and that, so far from forgetting any of his attendants, he had left to all of them very handsome legacies, proportioned to the nature of the offices they respectively held in his household: and indeed, a few days after his obsequies were performed, Donna Catherina called us together, and having ordered her secretary to read the codicil, said, "Whenever any of you choose to receive your legacy, my banker shall pay it. But this is not all," added she; "if you choose to return to Sicily with the new Viceroy, you shall each of you receive your former salary."

The Duchess had scarcely finished these words before the greater part of the assembly testified their inclination to accompany Don Juan; the others, preferring their own country to Italy, took measures for their continuance in Spain.

Donna Catherina appeared surprised to find that I was among those who had testified no inclination to revisit Palermo. "Vanillo," said she, "I have been flattering myself that you would not withhold from my son the same attachment you professed to his father; but you appear to have alienated

your mind from the family, and show no inclination to accompany us to Sicily."

"Madam," replied I, "Sicily is a country which, when I consider the mortifications I felt there, cannot be very pleasing to me; but whatever occasion I may have had to hate it, I should very willingly return, if I were persuaded that my services would be as acceptable to the present Viceroy as they were to his predecessor."

"You will have no reason to doubt that," replied Donna Catherina; "my son is extremely partial to you; he considers you as adopted by the family, and you will be, among his principal agents, the one who will possess his entire confidence."

The Duchess had no occasion to say anything more to induce me to engage in the service of her son; and Don Juan, who came in at this conjuncture, learning the subject of our conversation, confirmed all his mother had said; he even added, that it was his inclination to appoint me his principal valet, his confidential friend, his Thomas; and a situation so high and distinguished, with a young and gallant nobleman, appeared to me so flattering and advantageous, that I no longer hesitated of accepting it.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE NEW GOVERNOR, AND THE ACCIDENT WHICH PREVENTED VANILLO FROM ACCOMPANYING HIM TO SICILY—THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS ACCIDENT.

DON JUAN succeeded to the titles of his deceased father; and, by the unexpected favour of the crown, was put into immediate possession of his confiscated estates. The King, indeed, by these acts of kindness seemed only to second the wishes of all ranks and orders of his subjects; for the enmity which had pursued the family during the prosperity of the Duke, was entirely buried in his grave.

The new Viceroy no sooner heard that the six ships which had been appointed to convey him to Palermo were ready, than he took leave of his royal benefactor, and departed for Barcelona, accompanied by his wife, Donna Isabella; it being thought more prudent for Donna Catherina to remain at court, in order to cultivate and support a powerful interest in favour of her beloved son. The aged Thomas, whom she knew possessed an excellent judgment, and whose gouty complaints rendered it of little use for him to accompany the new Viceroy, also continued at Madrid. The pleasure and profit I had long promised myself from this expedition, through the interests of Quivillo, who enjoyed in a high degree the confidence and friendship of the new Viceroy, my adverse stars prevented me from reaping.

On the evening of the day fixed for our departure, I was unfortunately seized with a violent fever, which increased so rapidly, that my life was thought in danger. A physician was immediately sent for, who, although he was scarcely thirty years of age, had perhaps already despatched more patients than Hippocrates himself. This seventh son, after a very profound consideration of my case, wrote a prescription, consisting of frog's gall and baked wheat, which, he observed, according to the opinion of Pliny, was an unerring febrifuge in all cases; but I no sooner tasted this compound than I was seized with such strong convulsions, that the doctor seemed perfectly satisfied I should soon have no occasion for any other medicine. I continued delirious for three days. During this time I was again attacked, not only by the doctor, but by his coadjutors, the surgeon and the apothecary, in such a variety of ways, that they seemed resolved I should ultimately tell no tales. By the greatest miracle imaginable, however, I at length escaped alive from their hands.

The moment I thought my health sufficiently established to undertake the journey, I departed from Madrid with a returning muleteer for Barcelona; and we travelled so expeditiously, that we arrived there at the end of eight days. My conductor carried me to St. Andrew's Gate, in the New Town, and set me down at the sign of the Phœnix, an hotel of very decent appearance.

"I have brought you here," said he, "in preference to any other place, for several reasons; you will here find a neat room, a comfortable bed, excellent fare, and, what ought to make a considerable

part of your pleasure, you will behold in your hostess a young and charming widow, extremely good-humoured, and extremely sensible."

"So much the worse," replied I, jokingly; "her merits are mortifying to a traveller who has not time to make love; for if I should find an opportunity to-morrow to embark for Italy, I must embrace it."

Just as I had ended this sentence, the hostess entered the room.

"Here she is," cried the muleteer; "does she not deserve a guest of your consequence? Look attentively at her figure."

I was, I confess, struck with her beauty, and still more by the easy and natural style of her conversation. She showed me, with great politeness, the chamber in which I was to sleep, which I attributed to the muleteer having, on our arrival at the hotel, announced me as one of the principal attendants on the Duke of Ossuna, the new Viceroy of Sicily. To pay, on my side, that tribute which every man of gallantry owes to a pretty woman, I made a thousand flattering speeches to her, which she answered with equal good sense and modesty. The conversation in which we engaged insensibly, convinced me that, amiable as her person certainly was, her mind possessed superior charms.

On the first suspension of the conversation, she retired and left me with the muleteer, who asked me what I thought of such a widow.

"I am of opinion," said I, "that a man can nowhere be so well attached. In what part of Spain was she born? She does honour to her

country. I am sure she is descended from a good family."

"I am ignorant who were her parents," said the muleteer; "I only know that she is a native of the city of Murcia."

My heart bounded in my bosom at these words, and I felt a strong kind of anxiety, without knowing why or wherefore. "By heavens!" said I to myself, "if this young widow should be my sister Inesilla, it would be an extraordinary circumstance. It is very probable; yet surely it cannot be. I will, however, unravel the mystery this very evening, if possible."

"My friend," said I to the muleteer, "as I was also born in the city of Murcia, I should be very glad to have a private conversation with this widow upon the subject of her family, whom I ought to know; especially if she is not of very low extraction, which I cannot believe. Go, I request of you, and tell her from me, that I shall be happy to converse with her on the subject."

The muleteer, who went immediately to the widow, informed me, on his return, that she would wait on me immediately; "for I no sooner told her," said he, "that you were from Murcia, and wished to talk with her on the subject, than she appeared highly delighted. Oh! here she is. Well, I will leave you together, that you may the more freely indulge your curiosity."

The muleteer accordingly retired, as the hostess, who had immediately followed him, entered the room.

CHAPTER LIV.

VANILLO'S CONVERSATION WITH THE WIDOW, AND THE ASTONISHMENT OF BOTH OF THEM ON DISCOVERING WHO THEY WERE.

"MADAM," said I to the widow, "I am informed that we were born in the same place. Permit me to converse with you upon this subject, and to take the liberty of asking who you are. It is not an idle curiosity that prompts me to make this request; I have a very particular reason for asking you the question. Tell me, I beseech you, who were your parents."

"Signior," replied the widow, "I was born in the city of Murcia; and, though my parents were not noble, their condition was by no means vulgar: my father, whom I lost in early infancy, was a physician, who had received his education in the university of Alcala."

"How! What was his name?" exclaimed I, with precipitation and emotion.

"His name was Vanillo Gonzales," replied the widow. "But," added she, observing my agitation, "why are you thus moved? You seem to be interested in what I say. Did you know my father?"

"Oh! perfectly well," said I, "as well as his own son; for, if I am not mistaken, he had one named Vanillo."

"You are not mistaken," said she, "Vanillo is my brother's name; but alas! poor boy, I am ignorant what is become of him. He quitted Murcia one morning secretly, and since that time I have never heard of him."

Tears ran down her cheeks as she pronounced these words, which it was impossible for me to observe with dry eyes. Charmed to discover so fine a sympathy in a sister, I instinctively followed her example.

Astonished at my appearing so sensible to her sorrows, "You weep, you weep," exclaimed she. "Oh! you are—you are my brother! Your sensibility discovers you. It is Vanillo, my brother, I am speaking to! Acknowledge it immediately, I implore you; for every moment you delay the confirmation of my hope, you delay the happiness of my life."

"Well, my sister," said I, touched by the marks of affection she showed, "yes, I am your brother. Your Vanillo is before you."

In pronouncing these words, I opened my arms, and we embraced each other for a quarter of an hour, without being able otherwise to express the mutual joy which overwhelmed our hearts.

The claims of consanguinity being in some degree satisfied by this tender indulgence of sincere affection, we requested of each other a faithful relation of our respective adventures since our departure from Murcia, and I promised to detail a real narrative of everything I had met with, whether good or bad, on condition that she would afterwards relate to me, with equal sincerity, the story of her life, which she

instantly consented to do; but as we had both of us much to say, and I was greatly fatigued with my journey, we thought it better to postpone this reciprocal confidence until the ensuing morning.

After partaking of an excellent supper, I retired to bed, where I slept profoundly until nine o'clock the ensuing morning, when, awaking fresh and gay, I arose, and hastily dressing myself, went to wait upon my sister, whom I met as I was going out of my chamber; when, retiring to her apartment, we sat down, and without further ceremony I recounted my exploits, not indeed without sometimes concealing and sometimes colouring the truth, which I did with less scruple, because I was persuaded that my dear sister would not fail to do as much in her turn, notwithstanding the solemn promise of sincerity we had mutually made.

A history like mine always contains parts which require to be softened down, and obliges the hero to sacrifice truth in order to maintain his honour. I imitated, in short, those painters who, to temper the harshness of their tints, blend them nearly with each other. Obliged, for example, to speak of the will which my uncle made in my favour, the reader will hardly imagine I was so foolish as to confess to my sister that I permitted his unjust suspicions to prevail against her, without endeavouring to remove them. Oh no! I touched the delicate scene with the pencil of a master.

"My dear Inesilla," said I, in an affectionate manner, "you cannot conceive how sensibly I was mortified when I discovered that no notice was taken of you in the will. Sole inheritor as I was of the

fortune of our Uncle Damien, I could not help reproaching his memory for having forgot you, and, to vindicate your wrongs, I determined to divide all his effects with you."

"Generous Vanillo!" exclaimed Inesilla, interrupting me in this place and embracing me; "how happy am I in having such a brother."

"Inesilla," said I, interrupting her in my turn, "instead of rejoicing upon this subject, you have reason to complain that you have so unfortunate a brother. The rich inheritance of our uncle, alas! the half of which I intended for you, is no longer in my possession. Permit me to conclude my history, and you will hear what became of it."

These words seemed a little to confound my coheiress, who, conceiving that I had been robbed of the inheritance, grieved inwardly, as it appeared to me, on account of her part and portion. But I was unacquainted with the character of my sister; for, having finished my story, my sister addressed me in the following manner:—

"I lament, my dear brother, that you have had any contest with the Inquisition, since you lost by it such a mine of wealth. Do not, however, imagine that I feel any mortification on my own account; it would be doing me great injustice. My sensibility to this misfortune is affected entirely by a consideration of your interests; for I am, thank Heaven, comfortably situated, and even in a condition to make a proposal to you, which I implore you not to reject. Live hereafter with me; let us unite our fortunes. Relinquish your intended voyage to Italy. It will not, perhaps, be more fortunate to you than the

former. What has the late Duke of Ossuna done for you? Nothing: and it is most likely his son will not use you much better. Great men are not always to be relied on. Where one of them rewards his adherents with liberality, there are thirty who repay them only with ingratitude. In short, my dear brother, since Providence has thus decreed we should meet again, we will never part. Barcelona is a place in which a man may pass his time agreeably, and I assure you that you shall never want money."

"How, Inesilla!" said I, smiling at these last words; "you excite high ideas of the contents of your strong box, and increase my curiosity to learn the means by which you have enriched yourself."

"Your curiosity is natural," replied Inesilla, "and I will by-and-by perform my promise, with all the sincerity you can possibly wish."

My sister, having made these observations, began her history in the following terms.

CHAPTER LV.

THE HISTORY OF INESILLA, THE SISTER OF VANILLO.

A SHORT time after the death of our father, Dr. Gonzales, you recollect that our Uncle Damien took you under his roof to teach you the sublime art of surgery, in which he was so profoundly skilled ; and placed me, when only six years of age, at the castle of Cantarilla, to be there educated by my godfather, the owner of it, and my godmother, who, during six years, lived with him upon terms that wore every appearance of conjugal union. Both of them interested themselves in the care of my education ; and, fancying I possessed a disposition to return all the kindness they bestowed, I became the sole object of their concern.

The sudden death of Don Isidore de Cantarilla, my godfather, deprived me of his friendship while I was yet a minor, and left both my godmother and myself, unprotected orphans, to bewail his loss ; the one from interest, and the other from affection.

Scarcely had the breath left his body before his hungry heirs repaired to the castle, from whence they very uncivilly expelled his female friend. But, while they continued untouched by the torrents of tears she shed upon this occasion, they affected to feel some pity for me. The charms of youth, and a promise of increasing perfections, in some degree

awakened their concern for my situation ; and, on a council being called to consider what they ought to do with me, an aunt of the deceased, an old devotee, was of opinion that the heirs ought to contribute, in certain proportions, towards my education, until I should be capable of providing, by servitude, for myself. But this proposal was unanimously rejected; the heirs being of opinion that it would be much better to leave me entirely to the care of my godmother, than to be at any expense on my account themselves ; and she immediately discovered all the affection of a mother for her adopted child, by immediately assenting to take me under her own protection.

In vain did the old devotee represent to them the danger of placing me under the guidance of a person of my godmother's character ; they paid no attention to her remonstrances ; and, without embarrassing their minds with any conjectures respecting my future welfare, surrendered me quietly and entirely to her care. I accordingly accompanied my kind sponsor to a cottage in the vicinity of Alicante, the owner of which, an old husbandman, was her near relation.

Talego, for that was the name of our rustic benefactor, received us with an extraordinary degree of hospitality. He was one of those characters whose arms are ever open to receive a poor relation. He had indeed always entertained a particular affection for Signora Barbarina, my godmother, who soon became the absolute mistress of his house ; for Talego, who had neither wife nor children, looked up to her superior sense with implicit confidence, and

permitted her to govern without the least contradiction.

The farm on which we resided extended almost to the gates of Alicante, and we daily visited the city, where Barbarina soon made a number of acquaintances. Among many others, she formed an intimacy with the widow of an alguazil ; and there was so much sympathy in their dispositions, that, in less than eight days, their acquaintance had all the appearance of a long-cemented friendship.

This widow, whose name was Alzina, was about forty years of age, had been extremely handsome, and still possessed sufficient beauty to inspire a transient passion.

While these transactions were passing, I advanced in growth, and began to assume the appearances of maturity. My godmother, who had no intention to seclude me from the eye of admiration, thinking it was time to introduce me into the world, permitted me to accompany her on her visits to the city. On my first appearance I attracted the attention of a young gentleman, who, inexperienced as I was, I observed, gazed upon me with an extraordinary species of delight. You will easily imagine that, if at so young an age I was capable of making this observation, my godmother, who upon this subject was an experienced matron, did not fail also to see it ; I even perceived that she felt a secret pleasure at the discovery.

Albina, our kind friend, sometimes visited us at the cottage of Talego; but for one visit she paid us, we returned her four, as she was always surrounded with that which my godmother so anxiously sought

after, a party of good company. We scarcely ever visited her without meeting with two or three officers of the navy, and a young captain in the Guards, who, it was said, waited for a favourable opportunity of passing to Genoa, in order to join his regiment in the Milanese; but the moment of departure was always delayed, and, in fact, never arrived. Can you well believe that I was the cause of this delay? This young officer whose name was Don Gabriel de Ginestar, struck, without doubt, rather by the lively splendour of my youth than with any beauty I possessed, became deeply enamoured with me; but instead of making a declaration of his passion, he prudently concealed it under so specious an appearance, that almost every eye was deceived. I confess I felt an affection for him, and was astonished to find a young man of his profession so sensible and grave; but he was far from being what he seemed, and the young traitor soon afterwards throwing off the mask, convinced me of the error of believing a character virtuous from his exterior conduct.

Don Gabriel had formed a design to carry me off, and had concealed his measures so judiciously, that one evening, as I was returning alone to the cottage—a circumstance which very seldom happened—he executed his plan without the least difficulty. Three or four men seized me suddenly in their arms, and carried me instantly on board a vessel which was waiting ready on the shores of the gulf, and which put immediately to sea.

The violence with which I was seized had caused me to faint away, and I continued for a long while totally senseless. When recollection returned, I cast

my eyes on the persons who surrounded me, and discovered Don Gabriel de Ginestar, who, to prevent my reproaches, or rather to alleviate my anguish, addressed me in an humble and respectful manner.

"My lovely Inesilla," said he, "you have reason, I confess, to complain of my conduct, and perhaps to consider me as a brutal ravisher. But suspend your anger, however justifiable it may be, and listen to me for a moment with calm attention, and you will not find me unworthy of your forgiveness. Observe, I implore you, that I have not taken you from the protecting care of a tender father or affectionate mother, but from the custody of a woman who is a stranger to your family, from a woman who would have sold your honour; for I know her better than you do, and am convinced that she has only protected you hitherto with this infamous view. Therefore, my charming maid, instead of considering me as your enemy, you ought to view me as an agent sent by Heaven to shield your innocence from the danger to which it was exposed. I am a gentleman of independent fortune; I adore you. Permit me to conduct you to my mansion, and as a proof of the purity of my intentions, to offer you my hand in marriage."

Don Gabriel expressed these sentiments with such eloquent tenderness, that the outrage he had committed vanished from my view. Instead of invectives and imprecations, I could only answer him with sighs and tears; and he permitted me to indulge my feelings without interruption. While this unequal conflict was passing in my mind, the fatal vessel arrived at a creek near Tortosa, where this second

Paris carried me on shore, and, handing me into a carriage which had been previously provided by his orders, we arrived in a short time at the castle of Ginestar.

Conceive, my dear brother, the alarm I felt on finding myself entirely at the mercy of my ravisher; but he appeared so respectful and polite, that my fears in some degree subsided; and, having promised not to conceal anything from you, I must even confess that I brought myself in a short time to look on him without apprehension.

"My dear Inesilla," said I, interrupting my sister in this part of her narrative, "it is not difficult to divine the rest. The gentleman in time appeared amiable; your heart beat responsive to his love; and you continued mistress of his house, without becoming his wife."

"No; pardon me," replied Inesilla; "he performed his promise, married me, and convinced me, by his conduct, of the integrity of his character. Receiving from him every attention which a wife can expect, my heart, sensible of his tenderness, repaid his kindness with gratitude. The union in which we lived was perfect; but scarcely had we tasted the felicities of our happy state, when we were obliged to part. Don Gabriel was ordered to join his regiment in Italy; and soon afterwards a battle was fought, the first he was ever engaged in, in which he lost his life.

In addition to my misfortune, I received, with the sad news of his death, information of a circumstance, of which I was before entirely ignorant; for Don Gabriel never communicated to me the situa-

tion of his affairs. It appeared that all the inheritance he derived from his father was his great name; that his estate at Ginestar was mortgaged far beyond its present value; and that I should be extremely fortunate if his creditors did not wrest from me the trifling annuity he had settled on me, by way of jointure, previous to our marriage.

I was now reduced to the situation of a noble but indigent widow; but a dowager of fifteen years of age is not usually abandoned by the world. Don Cosmo de Tevisa, a gentleman of landed property in the vicinity of the castle of Ginestar, and the uncle of my deceased husband, came immediately to me with an offer of his services. He was between fifty and sixty years of age, venerable and philosophic in his appearance; and in his conversation a perfect Seneca, for it consisted entirely of moral sentences. He had frequently visited at the castle, but his attentions to me after I was widowed considerably increased.

"My dear niece," said he, on his first visit after the death of Don Gabriel, "incapable as I may be of removing your afflictions, I may at least endeavour to alleviate them, by offering you my fortune and my advice."

This generous offer he accompanied with so many affectionate expressions, and appeared so sensible of my situation, that I returned my thanks to Heaven for having sent me a friend with so compassionate a heart. The seeming sincerity of his friendship, and still more the veneration that was due to his age, inspired me with confidence and esteem; for I conceived the bosoms of the aged were freed from

the tyranny of love; I was, however, soon undeceived. The philosophic Don Cosmo, on his second visit, convinced me that, in spite of his philosophy, a violent and increasing passion for me was working in his breast: he vainly endeavoured to conceal it under the veil of friendship; for it burst forth in all his conversations. During our interview, he pressed me with great warmth to accept the protection of his house.

"The creditors of Don Gabriel," said he, "will soon seize upon his estate, and it will be mortifying to you to be driven from the castle. Come to my mansion," added he, in a soft accent; "come and reside upon my estate. It is, as you know, pleasantly situated; besides, there are in its neighbourhood many ladies of merit, with whom you may pass your time very agreeably. You will also live with an uncle, whose happiness your company and conversation will tend greatly to increase."

A thought passed silently through my mind as Don Cosmo uttered these words. "Oh ho!" said I to myself, "I have a very affectionate uncle! He intends, I fear, to make me pay a high price for this proffered hospitality. He will, I conjecture, offer me his hand, and the situation of my circumstances may possibly induce me to listen to his suit."

My conjecture was well founded. Don Cosmo soon afterwards made to me a formal declaration of his love, expressed the captivity in which he was held by my charms, and assured me that he was ready to marry me immediately; adding, in order to gild the pill, and make me swallow it with less reluctance, that he would provide for me in such a

manner as would compensate for the want of youth, which he no longer possessed. Inclination, had that alone been consulted, would have politely dismissed my loving uncle, whose person was but ill formed to interest a youthful fancy in its favour; but I had already begun to think seriously, and I at length consented, not without aversion, that this old gentleman should become my second husband.

A man who, in the autumn of life, marries a woman young enough to be his granddaughter, attaches himself to her, in general, with extraordinary fondness. The happiness of the unfortunate Don Cosmo, therefore, was not of long duration. At the end of six months I again became a widow! with this difference, indeed, that my second nuptials had placed me in an easy situation, without injuring any of my charms; for my two husbands had, as it were, flitted like shadows from my arms.

"I fancy," said I to my sister at these words, which excited a smile, "that you did not long continue in this easy situation: come, if you please, to your third husband."

"I request, my dear brother," replied she, "that you will not jest with such serious subjects. No part of my narration can, I think, authorise you to entertain suspicions of my virtue."

"On the contrary," replied I, "so far am I from condemning your second marriage, that it appears to me a strong proof of your wisdom and prudence. But if you continue to fly from husband to husband, I am fearful you will be thought to have followed inclination too closely."

"You are disposed to pleasantry, brother," said

Inesilla, smiling and blushing at the same time. "Certain it is, that if I had had many other husbands, I should have been *une franche Francie du Roi de Garbe*; but Don Cosmo had only one successor. Allow me, in kindness, this third husband; he was the one I loved the most. I shall proceed to describe to you the outline of the character of a man with whom, after a short courtship, I was united in the softest ties of Hymen, and by what accident death tore him from my arms in the prime of life.

Three months subsequent to the decease of Don Cosmo, I quitted the country and retired to Tortosa, to inhabit a house I had hired in that city. Enjoying, in this situation, the common privileges of widows, I continually received company at home, or sought it among my friends abroad. One day, visiting a family where a numerous party was assembled, a young gentleman, distinguished by a beauty of person which everybody admired, entered the room. The ladies in particular, I observed, viewed him with favourable eyes; and, to speak the truth, his appearance quite charmed me. But the pleasure he afforded me greatly augmented when I perceived that, from the first moment he observed me, I was the sole object of his attention. My vanity was highly flattered; I ardently longed to know the name and condition of this lovely stranger; and I determined not to leave the room until I had satisfied my curiosity. "Who is he?" said one to the other, in a whisper, throughout the assembly; "what is his name?" The information was returned in a whisper by those who knew him, and I at length learned that the name of this dangerous mortal was Saloni, and

that he was the son of an opulent merchant in Barcelona.

Finding that he was not—as, from the style of his behaviour, I had conceived him to be—a man of quality, I felt, like a worthy widow of two Hidalgos, a certain degree of pride, and dismissed the young citizen entirely from my mind. But it was not so with him. Observing him walk on the ensuing day up and down before my window, casting at me the most significant looks, I was convinced that the daring youth ambitiously raised his thoughts to me. Not contented with besieging my door by day, he passed under the balcony at night, and serenaded me with a concert, both vocal and instrumental. The sound of his voice was delightfully melodious; but, not entirely relying on his sieve of songs, he gained, by certain presents, the interests of Laura, my confidential female, who promised him, in return for his money, to procure him an interview with me.

Laura had discovered that Saloni was, in my estimation, extremely agreeable; I had indeed confidentially confessed it to her, and she entertained no doubt of procuring my consent to see him. When she made the proposal to me, however, I made many objections; but the cunning jade, aided by the powerful eloquence of Love, removed them all so effectually, that one fine night she introduced Saloni as a favoured lover into my chamber.

As usual upon such occasions, he threw himself at my feet, and with a transport of passion exclaimed, “Oh! divine idol of my heart, have I then at length the happiness to hope that your tongue will confirm the language of your eyes? Conscious that a man

whose birth is not illustrious cannot, without high presumption, offer you his hand, it is the violence of passion with which you have inspired me that conquers all control and forces me to speak."

Having made this declaration, he continued in silent expectation of my answer, which was such as induced him to believe that his boldness was not unpardonable. Instead of affecting a proper degree of pride in honour of the memory of my two former husbands, I had not even power to conceal the lurking affections of my heart. The youth perceived the conquest he had made; and, to render it complete, he urged his suit with such tender and passionate address, that I was quite overcome. The soft eloquence, the charming figure, the tender pressure of such a lover, was, as you perceive, extremely embarrassing; but, in spite of the tender attachment I felt for him, I preserved a sufficient degree of firmness to dismiss him from my chamber before the dawn of day, and escaped the peril to which my honour was exposed by indulging so dangerous a conversation.

"A fortunate escape," cried I; "you make me tremble at the idea of your second interview."

"Do not be alarmed," replied Inesilla. "To dissipate your fears and shorten my history, I shall immediately inform you that Saloni wrote me a letter the ensuing day, expressive of his impatience to espouse me, and his intention to depart for Barcelona to procure his father's consent. I signified to him by Laura my approbation of his design, and that my consent would follow that of his father.

The youthful lover flew to Barcelona on receiving

this permission, and returned again in eight days. "Madam," said he, "my father has given me his consent,—you have promised me yours;—condescend to hasten the hour of happiness."

You will easily conceive that after this we did not long delay our nuptials; they were celebrated immediately; and, fifteen days afterwards, my new husband conducted me to Barcelona. I am fearful (continued Inesilla) that you will reproach me for having given my hand to a citizen, after having been the wife of two gentlemen. I appear, perhaps, in your eyes to have derogated—

"Oh! for shame, my dear sister," said I, smiling; "can you conceive me so absurd as to think that the daughter of a physician disgraces her family by marrying the son of a wine-merchant? Had you been the daughter of the great Hippocrates himself, I should not have blamed you."

"I think with you," replied Inesilla, "that I did not form an unworthy alliance; and, therefore, I frankly confess, with great respect for the memory of my two husbands, and the honour of my father, that whether their names bleed or not for my third hymeneal, gives me little concern. It was a union of which I never had occasion to repent.

My father-in-law received me with every demonstration of kindness, conceived for me the tenderest friendship, and was so well satisfied with my conduct, that he hardly knew how to caress me sufficiently. "I am delighted," said he continually to his son, "that you have chosen a wife so worthy of your love and of my affection."

The affection which the good old man entertained

for me was not unreturned ; or, to speak more justly, I attached myself to him as warmly as if he had been my own father. Cherished by my father-in-law and adored by my husband, you will judge whether my life was not completely happy ; but, as in this world everything is subject to change, my felicity soon vanished. While we were thus swimming in floods of joy the torrent of misfortune overwhelmed us. A *cholera morbus*, vulgarly called a *trousse galante*, carried off my husband in less than two days, in defiance of all the assistance which the ablest physicians of Barcelona could afford.

The extreme sensibility with which my father-in-law and myself felt the death of my adored husband had nearly deprived us of our lives ; but the kindness of Heaven fortified our minds, and restored us, by slow degrees, to health.

"My dear daughter," said old Saloni to me, after our recovery, "do not, I beg of you, leave a father who has so much occasion for your company to console his sorrows. Be to me as the son whom I have lost. Do not marry again"—

"Alas !" cried I, interrupting him, "you may be assured I will never again hear mention either of husband or of lover. I cannot feel an affection for any man after my dear Saloni, even though fortune should present me with a Prince"—

The good man did not give me time to finish the sentence ; but, embracing me with transport, "My daughter," cried he, "your sentiments charm me, and you well deserve the benefits I design for you. I intend to leave you all my wealth, and from this day you are complete mistress of this hotel."

Promises alone would not content him ; he immediately called together all his servants, and declared to them the absolute power he had given me over them. This species of power, although it afforded but little gratification to my vanity, I freely accepted, since it pleased my father-in-law to bestow it on me.

The moment it was known in Barcelona that the widow of young Saloni kept the Phoenix Hotel, the young gentry crowded in companies to the house ; and, when they found that, instead of submitting to their idle chatter, I conducted myself with a reserve which is not usual to persons in such situations, they afforded me their esteem, and established my reputation.

Three years after I had been intrusted to administer the affairs of this house, my father-in-law paid that great debt which we all owe to nature, and bequeathed me, by his will, a considerable fortune.

With unaffected sorrow did I bewail the death of this good old man ; but you will not expect that I was weak enough to become disconsolate for him, after having survived the loss of his dearer son. Time has dried up my tears ; and I have since continued to conduct the business, on my own account, with uninterrupted prosperity.

CHAPTER LVI.

VANILLO PREPARES TO QUIT HIS SISTER, IN ORDER TO JOIN THE NEW VICEROY AT PALERMO, BUT HE HEARS NEWS WHICH PREVENTS HIS DEPARTURE, AND INDUCES HIM TO STAY AT BARCELONA.

THE conclusion of Inesilla's confession was followed by very warm and affectionate expressions of the happiness she felt in meeting with a brother after so long an absence. "I have already, my dear Vanillo," said she with great anxiety, "told you that I have sufficient to enable both of us to defy hereafter the frowns of fortune. Let me persuade you to spend the remainder of your days with me in Barcelona. The judgment your experience of life has given you will be of infinite service to me in my present situation."

"Let Heaven witness for me, my dear sister," said I, "that were it not inconsistent with my present engagements, I should prefer the happiness of living with you to that of any other mode of life; but you know the obligation I am under. I cannot avoid going to Palermo; but I will continue with you as long as possible."

Inesilla, conceiving my resolution to follow the fortunes of the Viceroy unconquerable, declined all further attempt to change it. To render, however, my departure less painful, I promised to return to Barcelona within the space of two years, and to reside with her the remainder of my days.

Having passed four months very pleasantly with my sister, I prepared to embark for Italy, when news arrived of the death of the young Viceroy. Doubting the information, although it had every appearance of being true, I waited its confirmation with great inquietude; but the report at length prevailed so generally that I could no longer refuse it credit. It was that Don Juan, the new Duke of Ossuna, a few months after he had been received by the Sicilians with incredible joy, in honour of his father, had died of a disorder which all the skill of the physicians of Palermo could not cure.

The pleasure which my sister felt when she discovered that I no longer doubted the truth of this report, was great. "Well, my dear brother," said she, "the face of your affairs is now changed—the engagements which prevented you from uniting your fortune with mine no longer exist; but I fear you still retain a wish to mingle with nobility, notwithstanding the penurious gratitude with which the great have hitherto rewarded your zeal and services."

"Banish this idea, Inesilla," said I; "for, believe me, I am sincerely tired of the great world. It is much happier to live in a state of humble independence than of splendid servitude. To officiate as your principal assistant will be far preferable to me than to act in the highest offices which either a marquis or a duke can bestow. Yes, I shall feel superior pleasure in being able to lessen the cares and attention which your present situation requires. In short, I am satisfied that I shall live with you in perfect felicity, provided you do not introduce to me

another brother-in-law. I must confess I am not free from apprehensions upon this head."

"Oh!" cried my sister, "you may quiet your fears of this danger. I will never again put myself in the power of a husband. I think," added she, with a smile, "that I ought to be contented with three; although they were"—

"It is true," said I, interrupting her, "your con-nubial days have been so few, that the world, perhaps, would not reproach you; but continue as you are: to render our union indissoluble, the temple of Hymen must be shut against both of us. If we are to live in uninterrupted happiness, there must be neither a brother nor a sister-in-law in our household."

"I have already told you, and I repeat it," said Inesilla, "the altar of Hymen shall no more smoke with incense on my behalf; and I am ready to swear to it by everything that can render an oath inviolable."

"And, on my part," replied I, "I have long ago made a vow of celibacy, and you may be assured I shall perform it."

Having interchanged promises to pass the rest of our days, on her part, in the agreeable state of widowhood in which she was now so happily placed; and on mine, in the free and unperplexed condition of a bachelor, to which no other in this life is comparable; "Vanillo," said my sister, "I now associate you to my house and fortune, which is already in a flourishing state. Let us augment it by our mutual care, and sign a deed before a notary,

that we hold our properties as joint-tenants, that each may have the benefit of survivorship."

I was not such an enemy to my own happiness as to refuse the advantages which Inesilla so generously offered me. I therefore willingly signed the deed of gift; and by this dash of the pen laid the foundation of my fortune, and rendered myself a happy man.

Behold me then, thank Heaven, master at the Phœnix Hotel;—a condition with which I am so fully satisfied, that I perceive it will be my last. Well, and why should I wish for a higher situation? I enjoy everything in great abundance, and live a life of perfect independence. That is not true, some contradictory reader perhaps will say. Can a man, in the service of the public, be independent? Is it not rather being a servant to all the world? Yes, in some degree it is; but there is a wide difference between a man being devoted to the service of the public, and the service only of private individuals. The last is civil to his customers for their money; but the first crouches like a miserable slave to the imperious disposition of a severe and capricious master. In short, the one serves without being a slave, and the other is a slave during the time he serves.

THE END.